



County of Malheur

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1108 S.W. 4th Street • Ontario, OR 97914 • (541) 889-7279

March 3, 2021
For Immediate Release

Warning Week: Malheur County could be moving to High Risk if case rate doesn't decrease

After bypassing the High Risk level last week, Malheur County could be moved back a step when the state adjusts its risk level summary for Oregon counties next week if the COVID-19 case rate doesn't decrease. Such a change would result in a decrease in occupancy allowed at eating and drinking establishments, shopping centers, entertainment venues, gyms, and other indoor and outdoor services and activities.

The [risk levels](#) are part of a four-tier system used by the Oregon Health Authority to help counties reduce the spread of COVID-19. The system uses testing data to determine risk and provide guidance on public safety measures, such as occupancy limits and closures. Last Friday, after meeting the criteria to move two levels from Extreme to Moderate Risk, many of Malheur County's businesses were allowed to open for indoor service for the first time since the risk level system was implemented following a statewide two-week freeze in November.

Based on population, Malheur County's risk level is determined by two indicators: case rate (number of cases per 100,000 people) and test positivity rate. [This week's report](#), which can be accessed from this [webpage](#), shows that from Feb. 14 through Feb. 27, Malheur County's case rate was 159.2 and test positivity rate was 4.5%. The test positivity rate is in the Lower Risk range but the case rate falls in the High Risk category. These numbers include adults in custody reported by Snake River Correctional Institution. The final weekly report, from which those cases are removed for the purpose of determining risk level, has not yet been updated this week by the [Governor's Office](#).

Oregon counties are currently in Week One, also called the Warning Week, which allows counties to prepare for a potential risk level change. No change to risk levels will take place as a result of this week's report.

During Week Two, also called the Movement Week, updated data is published and county risk levels are assigned. Risk levels take effect on Fridays and remain in effect for two weeks while the process repeats. The next risk level change will take place on March 12. It will be based on data collected from Feb. 21 through March 6.

The Malheur County Health Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, political beliefs or source of income. Interpreter services and/or other assistive aids are provided at our facility at no cost. Our facility is accessible.