



County of Malheur

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

Malheur County will remain at Moderate Risk despite case rate

Malheur County's COVID-19 case rate was just high enough over the past two weeks to tip it back into High Risk when risk levels are adjusted statewide this Friday, but an update to the state's risk level system and a new two-week caution period, [announced last week](#) by Governor Kate Brown, will allow the county to remain at Moderate Risk for now.

An [announcement](#) by Gov. Brown today confirmed that Malheur County will remain at Moderate Risk and explains a modification to last week's updated risk levels.

Beginning this week, counties that reduced their COVID-19 spread enough to move down in risk level in the previous two-week period, but see their numbers go back up in the next two-week period, will be given a two-week caution period to bring COVID-19 case rates back down again. Malheur County was one of two counties affected by the new caution period; the other is Jackson County, which qualified for Extreme Risk but will stay at High.

According to today's announcement, "the caution period will allow counties to re-focus efforts to drive back down creeping case numbers, and give local businesses additional certainty on their plans for operating. If, at the end of the caution period, case rate data still puts the county at a higher risk level, the county will move to that level."

"We applaud Gov. Brown in her decision to give Oregon counties the opportunity to avoid the see-saw effect that Movement Weeks can bring, particularly for counties the size of Malheur. One small outbreak can make the difference between risk levels, and that uncertainty from week to week is a hardship on our business community that is already reeling," Malheur County Health Department Director Sarah Poe said.

Today's [Risk Level Summary](#), released weekly by the Oregon Governor's Office on [this webpage](#), shows that Malheur County had 33 positive cases of COVID-19 between Feb. 21 and March 6, making the case rate (number of cases per 100,000 people), 103. Case rates between 100 and 200 are considered High Risk.

Two fewer cases over the last reporting period would have qualified the county to stay at Moderate Risk without the help of a caution period.

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“Just two cases in a community with a population of over 32,000 – that really makes clear the role that each of us has in getting and keeping Malheur County open. If you are eligible, get vaccinated, and please continue to do your part by wearing a mask, limiting gatherings, practicing physical distancing, staying home if you feel unwell, and getting tested if you believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19,” Poe said.

Effective March 12 through March 25, there will be two counties in the Extreme Risk level, nine at High Risk, 12 at Moderate Risk, and 13 at Lower Risk. A complete list of counties and their associated risk levels is available [here](#).

Updates to county risk levels will be posted to coronavirus.oregon.gov.

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