



County of Malheur

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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

April 28, 2021
For Immediate Release

Malheur County will return to Moderate Risk on Friday

Twenty-five COVID-19 cases over the two-week period from April 11-24 are enough to send Malheur County back into Moderate Risk this Friday. A Governor's Office [press release](#) on Tuesday urged Oregonians to get vaccinated as case counts rise throughout the state.

Malheur County is one of 18 counties moving to a higher risk level this week following cancellation of the state's warning week; 15 of them are moving to Extreme Risk. Under the risk level framework, explained [here](#), counties move to or remain in Extreme Risk when they meet the county metrics for test positivity and case rates, and Oregon meets statewide hospitalization metrics: COVID-19-positive patients occupying 300 hospital beds or more, and a 15% increase in the seven-day hospitalization average over the past week.

"If we don't act now, doctors, nurses, hospitals, and other health care providers in Oregon will be stretched to their limits treating severe cases of COVID-19," Gov. Kate Brown said.

Gov. Brown is partnering with lawmakers to approve a \$20 million small business emergency relief package to immediately support impacted businesses in Extreme Risk counties.

In Malheur County, restaurant owners received an email on Tuesday from Environmental Health Director Craig Geddes regarding the upcoming risk level change and resulting restrictions on capacity and services:

- Indoor seating is allowed at 50% occupancy and maximum capacity of 100 people
- Groups of no more than 6 people
- Outdoor dining with up to 150 people
- 11 p.m. closing time

Other affected sectors include social and at-home gatherings, indoor and outdoor recreation and fitness, indoor and outdoor entertainment, faith institutions, funeral homes, mortuaries, cemeteries, and offices. Detailed Moderate Risk guidance is available [here](#).

Gov. Brown encouraged Oregonians to keep their gatherings limited to outdoor settings. "Indoor transmission is a key driver in the COVID-19 surge that is making renewed health and safety restrictions necessary," she said.

(MORE)

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.

In an effort to speed up the return to normal business operations, county risk levels will be updated weekly for at least the next three weeks. Counties that improve their COVID-19 metrics will have the opportunity to move to a lower risk level. Those at Extreme Risk will remain there for a maximum of three weeks.

The Malheur County Health Department joins the Governor in encouraging all eligible Oregonians to get vaccinated. “With 14 cases in just the last three days, we are unfortunately seeing the result of more people not following the precautions of wearing masks and avoiding gatherings combined with a slow-down in the number of people protected by the COVID-19 vaccines,” MCHD Director Sarah Poe said. “The variants of SARS-CoV-2 are far more transmissible and are leading to more outbreaks and hospitalizations in both Idaho and Oregon. I can’t emphasize enough the importance of protecting those who are most vulnerable to save lives and getting vaccinated to prevent outbreaks. Talk to those you love about the importance of vaccination and call your pharmacy, healthcare provider, or the health department for help getting the vaccine to the eligible people in your life.”

###