



ISLAND COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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ISLAND COUNTY COVID-19 Updated Community Guidance August 17, 2020

Island County Public Health wants to make sure that the citizens of Island County have access to reliable guidance surrounding COVID-19. We will be updating our guidance to the community weekly and hope that you use this to help inform and empower yourself and our community.

Reduced and Modified Phase 3 Guidance

Island County is currently in a reduced and modified Phase 3 of the Governor's Safe Start Reopening plan. We are not in full Phase 3 and many restrictions remain in place. Continue to support our community by following current guidance.

- A number of adjusted Safe Start Phase restrictions have recently gone into effect. The number of individuals allowed in social gatherings during Phase 3 has been reduced to 10 people per week and a statewide ban has been placed on both indoor and outdoor live entertainment. Governor Inslee released a [memorandum](#) on the [Reopening Guidance webpage](#) clarifying this series of changes.
- Governor Inslee has released [education recommendations](#) for the 2020-2021 school year. Counties are organized into high, moderate, and low risk recommendation groups, which are determined by the number of new cases per 100,000 residents over a two-week period.
- Avoid all non-essential travel. Travel outside of Island County may result in increased risk of COVID-19 transmission. Before necessary traveling, research destinations to assess exposure risk using the [Phase and Risk Assessment Dashboard](#) and [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#).

COVID-19 Spread

The most recent Institute for Disease Modeling (IDM) [statewide report](#) shows that new cases are plateauing overall across the state.

- Cases were increasing in people age 40 to 69 and over 70, but the positive news is that a plateauing of cases is generally occurring across age groups in both western and eastern Washington (Spokane excepted). Continuing to follow masking and distancing guidelines is needed to help continue this trend.
- On August 11, 2020, DOH announced a new way of reporting testing and percent positive to better reflect the current status of the pandemic in Washington state. As a result, the state is not updating testing data until the new method is operational - this will take at least one week. This impacts test results at the individual level and the percent positivity. Confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, and hospitalizations data will not be impacted by this change.

How we Look at Data is Changing

This month, new guidance draws on updated data and matrixes. Information regarding COVID-19 confirmed cases, hospitalizations, deaths, testing, and demographics are all factors to take into consideration for moving forward with opening schools as well as long-term care facilities. Schools and long-term care facilities are not islands.

- WA DOH has provided a decision framework to assist local health officers and school administrators in making decisions around resuming in-person instruction for public and private K-12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Decision Tree for In Person Learning at Public and Private Schools](#)- WA DOH (08/05/20)
- A [phased plan](#) for long-term care facilities (LTCF) went into effect August 12, intended to safely allow visitors, group activities, and provide trips for residents outside the facility.
- Many restrictions are based on types of activities that pose more risk. DOH released a [report](#) that helps illustrate which types of businesses and facilities experience the most COVID-19 outbreak activity.

Survey to Determine Community Impact of COVID-19

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) recently launched the Community Recovery-Oriented Needs Assessment, or the CORONA survey. The survey is an effort to assess the behavioral, economic, social, and emotional impacts and the needs of communities across the state due to COVID-19.

The CORONA survey results will inform immediate, long-term, and ongoing actions that DOH and local health jurisdictions can take to address the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on Washingtonians. Visit www.wacoronasurvey.com to take part in the survey. To take the survey by phone, call 855-530-5787—interpreters are available to assist. The survey is voluntary and confidential.

Embrace Available Resources

- Washington State Department of Commerce is distributing approximately \$100 million in “CARES” Act funding to operate a [new rent assistance program](#). The program will focus on preventing evictions by paying up to three months of past due, current and future rent, for eligible participants.
- Financial supports are being made available to help families impacted by increased childcare needs/ school schedule changes. This is time limited, so families will need to complete a referral as soon as possible (by mid-September at the latest). Please complete the [online referral form](#) or call the Human Services Help Line at 360.678.2346 to learn more.
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) will [offer services remotely](#) until Sept. 30. In lieu of in-person visits, WIC may enroll new applicants, provide nutrition education and breastfeeding support and issue food benefits by phone or video chat.
- Visit the Washington State Department of Commerce [website](#) to locate drive-in Wi-Fi hotspots that provide free, temporary emergency internet access for Washingtonians.

Contact Us

If you have questions or concerns about COVID-19 in Island County, start by visiting our [website](#) or our [Facebook](#) page. The Island County call center may be reached at **360.678.2301**; Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.