



Chelan-Douglas Health District
www.cdhd.wa.gov
(509) 886-6400



Grant County Health District
www.granthealth.org
(509) 766-7960



Okanogan County Public Health
www.okanogancounty.org/ocph
(509) 422-7140

Public Health Recommendations for COVID-19

March 12, 2020

On March 11, 2020, Governor Inslee issued a Proclamation to minimize COVID-19 (Coronavirus) exposure, particularly in counties hit hardest by the virus. Starting March 11, 2020, *events that take place in King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties with more than 250 people are prohibited by the state.* This order applies to gathering for social, spiritual, and recreational activities. This includes but is not limited to: community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers and similar activities.

“This is an unprecedented public health situation and we can’t wait until we’re in the middle of it to slow it down. We’ve got to get ahead of the curve. One main defense is to reduce the interaction of people in our lives.” – Governor Inslee

Currently, COVID-19 has been confirmed in 13 counties in Washington, including three eastern Washington counties—Grant, Kittitas and Yakima—and has resulted in 29 deaths statewide. There is confirmed significant community spread in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

North Central Washington

Chelan-Douglas Health District, Grant County Health District, and Okanogan County Public Health are urging and recommending residents of our counties **voluntarily follow Governor Inslee’s proclamation and reduce large gatherings.** The Health Districts are firmly recommending this proactive step to minimize exposure to COVID-19 for our residents and to lessen the impact it has on our communities.

We recognize and understand the substantial impact these actions can have on our residents and communities. We have carefully weighed the risks and benefits of this recommendation. These actions are the most effective tools we have available to help slow the spread of the virus in our communities and protect our vulnerable residents.

Alternatives

If you are hosting an event or gathering, please consider the following alternatives:

- Utilize available technology options (e.g. livestreaming, virtual meetings), or
- Cancel or postpone the event until these recommendations have been lifted

If you have plans to attend an upcoming event or gathering, we encourage you not attend to protect yourself, your family, and the people you come in contact with on a daily basis.

Large events and gatherings

While we are recommending eliminating events on more than 250 people, all gatherings of people can pose risks. Any size gathering should ensure the following:

- Older adults and individuals with chronic medical conditions are encouraged not to attend
- Recommendations for social distancing and limiting close contact are met
- Employees or volunteers leading an event are screened for symptoms each day
- Proper hand washing, sanitation, and cleaning is readily available
- Environmental cleaning guidelines are followed (e.g., clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily or more frequently)

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

Remember to take every day preventative action to slow the spread of COVID-19.

1. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water; if unavailable, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing
3. Avoid large gatherings and close contact (less than 6 feet away) with others
4. Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces
5. Stay home and away from others if you are sick

Schools

At this point, we are not recommending closing schools, but we are watching the outbreak closely and may determine that school closures are necessary. **Schools should take steps now to prepare for the possibility of prolonged mandatory closures.**

In particular, schools should plan for how to continue to provide non-educational supports for their students such as providing food, developmental disability supports, and school-based healthcare.

Collective action can save lives

We all have people in our lives who are high-risk. We all are one mishap away from needing access to a functioning hospital. We all have a lot at stake.

Giving up social events will not be easy, and the impacts on businesses and jobs may be significant. But this is our best chance to save lives. It is in support of the most vulnerable in our community, and a protection for everyone.

The more united we can be in preventing the spread – be in this together – the greater the benefit for the whole community.



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