



ISLAND COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Administration

PO Box 5000
Coupeville, WA 98239
P: 360.679.7350 F: 360.679.7390

ISLAND COUNTY COVID-19 Updated Community Guidance September 1, 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.

Safely Celebrate this Holiday Weekend

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. Please continue to support our community by following current guidance during the upcoming holiday weekend.

- Gatherings should include no more than 10 people outside your household per week. Whether indoor or outdoor, group activities must follow the gatherings limitations. If planning holiday gatherings this weekend, please keep gatherings small and socially distanced.
- Many pieces of Phase 3 guidance have been modified at this time; please visit the [WA State Coronavirus webpage](#) for current, modified guidance. An [FAQ document](#) is available to clarify some details related to gatherings, food and alcohol service, and events.
- Non-essential travel outside of the county and state is highly discouraged at this time. Please recreate and shop as local as possible. Before necessary traveling, research destinations to assess exposure risk using the [Phase and Risk Assessment Dashboard](#) and [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#).
- On August 18, the Island County Board of Health issued a motion regarding restrictions to outdoor sporting activities in Island County. Additional details may be found in the [August 20 Announcement Regarding Recreation and Sporting Activities](#). A [safety plan template](#) is available for use on the Island County Public Health COVID-19 webpage, under "Safe Start Reopening Guidance".

Resiliency is the New Normal

As a community, we will need to continue to do things that limit the spread of COVID-19 until a safe and effective vaccine is available to us. This is the new normal for the near future. It is important that we support one another in accepting and thriving among with these measures.

- The most recent modeling [report](#) by the Institute for Disease Modeling (IDM) indicates that mitigation measures such as masking, social distancing, restrictions on gatherings, and limitations on traveling have had some success in reducing COVID-19 spread. These measures need to remain in place until a safe and effective vaccine is available.
- Current modeling supports the positive impact of mitigation measures on disease spread. In order to allow schools and businesses to operate as fully as possible under this new normal, we as a community need

to do our part and continue to follow recommended mitigation measures (e.g., masking and social distancing) and guidance. Read this [blog](#) for additional tips and tricks for making mask wearing a bit easier.

- Schools and business depend on community support of mitigation measures to remain open and to have students return to in-person instruction.
- Continuing to follow guidance and practice mitigation measures is hard- we need to continue to support each other during this difficult time. Talk to your loved ones and friends about the importance of following guidance. Read this [blog](#) for suggestions on talking about COVID-19 safety with friends and family.

Our Community Efforts are Making a Difference

Recent studies suggest that COVID-19 rates are plateauing across the state. Thank you for doing your part to contribute to the improved safety and security of our community. As the holiday weekend approaches, please celebrate responsibly and help us continue this trend in suppressing COVID-19 spread.

- IDM released their most recent COVID-19 state [Situation Report](#) on August 28. This report shows an overall plateau in cases with a potentially slight decline in cases. While this news is encouraging, we need to continue to practice safe mitigation measures to reduce COVID-19 cases further.
- The trends seen in eastern and western Washington are made up of a mix of different patterns across the state with some counties plateauing (e.g., King), some decreasing (e.g., Yakima), and others increasing (e.g., Grant). As of August 15, according to the [WA State COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard](#), 4 counties have low, 15 counties have moderate, and 20 counties have high COVID-19 activity. In addition, recent outbreaks are likely to lead to wider community spread as has been seen with previous outbreaks.
- High compliance with social distancing, limiting the size of gatherings, and masking remain the most effective ways to limit the spread of COVID-19 and an important component to controlling outbreaks.

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 also available to help families impacted by increased childcare needs/ school schedule changes. This is time limited, so families will need to complete and submit a referral by September 8. 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.