

CLARK COUNTY TO REMAIN IN PHASE 2 AS STATE PAUSES REOPENING PROCESS

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Vancouver, Wash. – Clark County’s application to move into Phase 3 of the state’s reopening plan has been put on pause. This afternoon, Gov. Jay Inslee announced a statewide two-week pause on the reopening process, following an increase in new COVID-19 cases and the percentage of tests coming back positive.

As a result, Clark County will remain in Phase 2.

“Public Health supports the governor’s decision to pause the reopening process,” said Dr. Alan Melnick, Clark County health officer and Public Health director. “We’re seeing a dramatic increase in the number of new cases in Clark County. I’m worried that our rising case numbers will lead to increase in hospitalizations and, potentially, deaths.”

From June 23 to June 30, 162 Clark County residents tested positive for COVID-19, for an average of more than 20 new cases per day. In the first three weeks of June, 164 people tested positive, for an average of more than seven new cases per day. Today, Public Health announced another 18 new cases.

“We must take steps now to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community if we want to be able to safely move to Phase 3,” Melnick said. “Wearing face coverings and maintaining physical distancing are easy things we can do to help keep our community open and our residents healthy.”

Other important ways to keep yourself and others healthy include washing hands frequently, using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water aren’t available, covering coughs and sneezes, not touching your face with unwashed hands, frequently disinfecting high-touch surfaces and staying home when sick.

In addition to the two-week pause on reopening, Gov. Inslee announced a new face covering requirement. Beginning Tuesday, the state will require all businesses to refuse service to customers who are not wearing face coverings. This requirement expands the current order in Yakima County to the rest of the state.

Public Health submitted its application to move into Phase 3 of the state’s four-phased reopening plan on Friday, June 26. Clark County residents and businesses should continue to follow the Phase 2 **guidance** outlined by the governor until the county is approved to move to Phase 3.

For more information about COVID-19 and the Public Health response, visit the **Public Health website**.

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