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Multnomah County must wait to reopen as Governor pauses further reopening statewide

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Status message

[UPDATE June 12 - Multnomah County has applied for Phase 1 reopening, but has not been approved. We will update information as soon as it becomes available.](#)

June 11, 2020

As case counts rise, health officials urge public to keep physical distance, take other recommendations to stay well

After spikes in COVID-19 cases in several counties, Gov. Kate Brown announced a one-week statewide pause on any further reopening late Thursday, putting Multnomah County's plans to enter Phase 1 on hold for at least another week.

Case counts have risen both statewide and in the Tri-County region since Multnomah County submitted its framework for reopening [on June 5](#). The County had expected to enter [Phase 1](#) of reopening tomorrow, allowing

seated service in restaurants and bars, personal services by appointment, the use of gyms and fitness centers, and gatherings of up to 25 people.

The rise in cases and hospitalizations began three weeks after the state lifted restrictions on retail services May 15. Those three weeks included Memorial Day weekend and the initial reopening of every other county in the state, including Clackamas and Washington counties.

In addition to the increase, the Oregon Health Authority said, more than 40 percent of new cases in could not be traced to a known case or outbreak. In Multnomah County, case investigators are still in the process of reaching and interviewing people who have tested positive in recent days. But there's no one large outbreak that explains the sharp rise in Multnomah County. Instead it is seeing clusters of cases among people who travel together and live together, as well as a number of smaller workplace outbreaks.

"This was not the outcome we anticipated when we submitted our application on June 5," said Chair Deborah Kafoury. "I understand how difficult this is for businesses, employers and families. But the increase in cases and delay in reopening is a reminder that we are very much still in this."

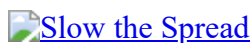
Multnomah County took extra care in its [reopening framework](#), focusing on the reality that the people most likely to be exposed at work — and those most likely to get seriously ill and die from COVID-19 — are the same people most impacted by racism, which causes many of the underlying conditions that can cause complications and death from the virus. The framework prioritizes the needs of Black, indigenous and other communities of color; people over age 65; people who live in congregate settings; and those with underlying health conditions.

"This is disappointing news for many," said Public Health Director Rachael Banks. "But we understand the state's desire to be cautious and thoughtful in the face of a virus that spreads easily, has no vaccine, and no cure. Lives are at stake."

As difficult as it is, Banks urged residents to continue to limit contact with people outside their household and to:

- Keep 6 feet from others when you are out in public
- Wear a face covering when you are out in public, if you are able and comfortable doing so
- Minimize non-essential travel
- Practice basic prevention — wash hands often, use hand sanitizer, don't touch your face, stay home when you are sick.

###



[Novel Coronavirus COVID-19](#)

Multnomah County is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Protect yourself and slow the spread.

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