

PRESS RELEASE

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Continue Preparations for Reopening in Kittitas County

The Kittitas County Incident Management Team is asking that everyone continue to prepare for reopening. Everyone, locally, is working hard for the people of Kittitas County. The Stay Home, Stay Safe order is changing and we will see our county reopen. Those reopening efforts will continue to be coordinated locally to help our businesses open as soon and as safely as possible.

The Stay Home, Stay Safe order was changed today by Governor Jay Inslee to allow for residential construction in the State of Washington. Numerous counties, including Kittitas County, have voiced concern over the inconsistencies in the state order. With that change today, residential construction agencies will be required to have safety plans in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 for their employees and customers.

“Every business in our county should be preparing a safety plan now and be preparing for Governor Inslee to release some restrictions by May 4. Start taking action, now, with the intention of being open in the near future,” states Health Officer Dr. Mark Larson. “Kittitas County will continue to look different as these changes occur, and please remember that changes will be slow.”

<https://coronavirus.wa.gov/business-workers/business-signage-toolkit> is a resource for businesses to address concerns of COVID-19. Elements for safety plans should include ways to maintain six-foot physical distance, limiting customer capacity, offering alternatives like delivery or pickup, and increased focus on handwashing and surface cleaning.

Kittitas County expects to see people wearing cloth masks in public, businesses operating differently than before, and large events with large amounts of people continuing to be canceled at this time. “In disease outbreaks, we always start with the least restrictive interventions and we will move back in that direction, but it will take time,” states Dr. Larson. The tools we have are non-pharmaceutical interventions: increase in handwashing, cough etiquette, keeping distance from others, frequently cleaning surfaces, remaining home when ill, and voluntary isolation. However, more restrictive interventions are involuntary isolation, cancellation of major events, closures of schools etcetera, prevention of non-emergency travel, and restriction of movement. The goal is to slowly move from the restrictive interventions to the less restrictive in a safe and calculated way.

The IMT is working on ensuring testing capacity and contact investigation will be ready as we move towards reopening. We are also working on a process for businesses to submit safety plans for review.

Please continue to watch our county website along with our Facebook page for more information. Questions about your health should be directed to your local healthcare provider or you can call the

Temporary COVID Clinic at KVH at 509-933-8850. For general COVID-19 questions, the Emergency Operation Center is at 509-933-8315 or 509-933-8305.

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