



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
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Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Opening up North Idaho

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Panhandle Health District

The day is fast approaching when North Idaho businesses will begin opening their doors. Governor Little announced Thursday morning his staged approach which includes epidemiological benchmarks that must be met to reopen Idaho. The governor based his plan on data and guidance from the CDC, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, and his business taskforce.

According to the plan, the approach reduces the risk of COVID-19 infection to Idaho's most vulnerable population, preserves capacity in our healthcare system, and provides a staged reopening of Idaho businesses. From an economic standpoint, Idaho's rebound from COVID-19 starts with employee and consumer confidence, which leads to business stability and growth.

Our community has many questions about this new plan and we want to answer them. First, the governor retains the power to change this plan if we start to see an increase in cases or any other adverse effect of any part of these stages. Everyone plays a role in keeping each other safe throughout this process.

Individuals are asked to continue doing the following:

- Engage in physical distancing of at least six feet
- Wear face coverings in public places
- Stay home if sick
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces and objects regularly

Employers are asked to continue doing the following:

- Maintain the six-foot physical distancing requirements for employees and patrons
- Provide adequate sanitation and personal hygiene for employees, vendors, and patrons
- Ensure frequent disinfection of the business as well as regular cleaning, especially of high-touch surfaces

- Identify how personal use items such as masks, face coverings, and gloves may be required by employees, vendors, and/or patrons
- Provide services while limiting close interactions with patrons
- Identify strategies for addressing ill employees, which should include requiring COVID-19 positive employees to stay at home while infectious, and may include keeping employees who were directly exposed to the COVID-19 positive employee away from the workplace, and the closure of the business until the location can be properly disinfected
- On a case-by-case basis, include other practices appropriate for specific types of businesses such as screening of employees for illness and exposures upon work entry, requiring non-cash transactions, etc.

Maintaining a 6-foot distance becomes impossible when businesses like hair and nail salons are allowed to open. This is why these businesses will open in the second stage of the plan.

We have created a poster that businesses eligible to open in Stage 1 per the Governor's guidelines can hang in their windows or on their front door to instruct patrons. We also have a checklist that Stage 1 employers can use to ensure their staff and clients are kept safe and healthy. These items are downloadable on our website. Childcare facilities are not required to submit a formal plan to us, but are encouraged to work with us on guidance for reopening if they have questions.

Some businesses who will be opening when we reach Stage 2 have been asked to have plans or protocols approved by the health district. These businesses include:

- Schools (cleaning and disinfecting protocols)
- Restaurants

We ask that these schools and restaurants certify that they will comply with the measures in the guidance.

This is an exciting time, but we do caution everyone to continue to be diligent or order to continue to slow the spread of this virus. We aren't out of the woods yet. Continue to practice social distancing, proper hand washing, wearing your cloth face covering, and cleaning regularly. We will make it through this together.

Kootenai Health and the Panhandle Health District are actively working to share information about COVID-19 with our community. You can find the latest updates and ways to protect yourself at [cdc.gov/covid19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19). If you have questions about COVID-19 or think you may have the virus, call the Panhandle Health District COVID-19 hotline at 1-877-415-5225.

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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