



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PHD Experiencing Back-log of COVID-19 Cases**

**PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT** – With the recent surge in cases, tight labor market and demobilization of the National Guard, Panhandle Health District (PHD) is experiencing a back-log of COVID-19 cases for July and August.

“A back-log creates two significant issues,” said Don Duffy, PHD interim director. “First, when our team is swamped with cases, we are unable to contact everyone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Second, we only report the number of cases processed that day, so the public doesn’t see the actual situation. For example, last Friday, August 20, we reported 36 cases, but in reality, we had over 900 cases left to process. We have temporarily mobilized PHD staff away from their current responsibilities to quickly eliminate the back-log.”

PHD currently has several positions open to hire additional staff to help with the COVID-19 efforts and welcomes all qualified candidates to apply. Positions can be found at [panhandlehealthdistrict.org](http://panhandlehealthdistrict.org)

“It is important for us to be transparent with our community as we know that schools, businesses, and individuals make important decisions based on the information we provide,” said Duffy.

Knowing that the community may not receive guidance in a timely manner, PHD wants to remind the public what steps to take if they test positive for COVID-19 or has had close contact with anyone who has COVID-19.

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, get tested and stay away from others while you await your results.
- If you test positive, self-isolate for 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and** 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) **and** other symptoms are improving.

- If you test positive, but have no symptoms, self-isolate for 10 days since you had a positive test.
- If you have had close contact to someone who has tested positive with COVID-19, self-isolate and wait 5-7 days before getting tested. If choosing not to test, self-isolate for 10 days since last exposure. If choosing to test end isolation after day 7 after receiving a negative test result (test must occur on day 5 or later).

Anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and who meets the following criteria does **NOT** need to stay home.

- Someone who has been [fully vaccinated](#) and shows no symptoms of COVID-19. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even they don't have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

**Or**

- Someone who has COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months **and**
- Has recovered **and**
- Remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath)

Whether unvaccinated or vaccinated, it is recommended that everyone over the age of 2, wear a mask while indoors and in crowded outdoor areas. Along with mask wearing, other simple preventative measures are recommended such as frequent hand washing, avoiding large events, and staying home when you are sick.

PHD urges the community to schedule their COVID-19 vaccine appointment through PHD or other [participating providers](#) in the area. Visit [PHD's COVID-19 Vaccine website](#) or call the PHD COVID-19 hotline to schedule your appointment at 877-415-5225.

Hotline hours of operation are Monday -Friday 9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm. If you are interested in volunteering in the COVID-19 response, please register at [www.volunteeridaho.com](http://www.volunteeridaho.com).

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**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.