

May 08, 2020

CATEGORY: News Release

RELEASE DATE: For Immediate Release

REGARDING: Stay Home Order and County Variance Request Approval

Background:

On May 1, 2020 Governor Inslee announced the extension of the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order until May 31st but allowed for small counties (with a population of less than 75,000) and no cases within the preceding 3 weeks to move into Phase 2 before the rest of the state. On May 5th Northeast Tri County Health District (NETCHD) submitted a variance request for Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties.

Ferry County and Pend Oreille County met the preliminary criteria for the variance request. The last confirmed case of COVID-19 occurred March 17th in Ferry County and April 13th in Pend Oreille County. For Stevens County, the last positive case was April 20th. If there are no new cases, Stevens County could be eligible to move to Phase 2 on May 11th. An additional positive case could affect the eligibility of each county to advance into Phase 2.

See https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SafeStartWA_4May20_1pm.pdf for additional information regarding the “Safe Start Washington: A Phased approach to Recovery”.

Response from Washington State Department of Health:

At 2:30 pm today, Governor Inslee announced the approval of Ferry and Pend Oreille Counties variance request to move to Phase 2. Stevens County has not yet been given the approval to advance to Phase 2 because there has not been three weeks since the last confirmed COVID-19 case. We anticipate notification of the request for Stevens County to be received on Monday, May 11th if there are no newly confirmed cases.

An individual Phase 2 business sector (e.g., manufacturing, new construction, retail, restaurants, etc.) may reopen only AFTER the state publishes its guidelines for the specific sector. The state is quickly working to finalize these and will publish each of them as each is finalized. After it does, an individual business is only allowed to reopen after it can implement those guidelines. The guidelines can be accessed at <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/what-you-need-know/safe-start>.

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Community Health Phone: 509-684-2262, Fax: 509-684-9878

Environmental Health Phone: 509-684-2262, Fax: 509-684-8506

Ferry County - 147 N. Clark, PO Box 584, Republic, WA 99166

Phone: 509-775-3111, Fax: 509-775-2858

Pend Oreille County - 605 Highway 20, Newport, WA 99156

Phone: 509-447-3131, Fax: 509-447-5644

Business/industry sectors listed under Phase 2 that have approved safety criteria/guidance and that may advance to Phase 2 is for:

- All phases of construction

Even with the approval to move forward into Phase 2, some businesses may need to delay their reopening until they have an adequate safety plan and facility modifications in place. Additionally, some businesses may choose to delay reopening until a later date to protect their own staff and patrons.

Business/industry sectors listed under Phase 2 that don't yet have approved safety criteria/guidance and cannot yet advance to Phase 2 are:

- Remaining manufacturing
- In-home/domestic services (nannies, housecleaning, etc.)
- Retail (in-store purchases allowed with restrictions)
- Real estate
- Professional services/office-based businesses (telework remains strongly encouraged)
- Hair and nail salons/barbers
- Pet grooming
- Restaurants/taverns less than 50% capacity and table size no larger than 5 (no bar-area seating)

From the Governor's Office, we understand that Phase 2 guidance documents will be ready Tuesday of next week. Businesses in Phase 2 may reopen when the guidance is published, and businesses are able to implement those guidelines.

Resources to Assist Businesses Reopening Safely:

Staff at NETCHD have put together packets with information and resources that businesses may use to ensure they are following the guidelines recommended for reopening. This information is available at www.netchd.org. Each business is going to be different in how they implement these guidelines based on their size, facility, and product. NETCHD is available to review safety plans for your businesses. Please contact our Environmental Health Department at 509-684-2262, option #2 if you have questions or concerns regarding the recommended guidelines.

Guidance During All Phases:

For high risk individuals, it continues to be important to limit their travel outside of their home to reduce risk of exposure. High risk individuals are defined as those persons 65 years of age and older, people of all ages with pre-existing medical conditions including those with chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immunocompromised, severe obesity, diabetics, chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, and those with liver disease.

It is important that we all take precautions until there is an effective COVID-19 vaccine or treatment. This guidance includes:

For Individuals:

- Use physical distancing, staying at least six feet away from others.
- When possible, wear a cloth face covering in public places.

- Stay home when sick.
- Avoid others who are sick.
- Disinfect surfaces and objects regularly.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes with unwashed hands.

For Employers:

- Use physical distancing of six feet between employees and patrons.
- Provide services while limiting close interactions between people. When this is not possible, use barriers to block sneezes and coughs when physical distancing of six feet is not possible.
- Provide ready access to handwashing facilities and hand sanitizing solutions.
- Frequently clean and disinfect, especially high touch surfaces.
- Identify personal protective equipment (PPE) and use in accordance with Labor and Industries (L&I) guidance.
- Educate employees on signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Have policies and strategies in place to address employee illness.
- Follow L&I guidelines.

See Northeast Tri County Health District's "[Getting Back to Business-Starter Pack](#)" and other business/employer resources at www.netchd.org.

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