



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Approves Whatcom County's Move to Phase 2

BELLINGHAM, WA —

Today, June 5, Whatcom County was approved to move to Phase 2 of Washington State's Safe Start reopening plan. Under Phase 2 more businesses can reopen and small gatherings can take place. Phase 2 takes effect immediately.

"We're incredibly pleased to be able to begin the process of reopening businesses and reuniting with friends and family safely," said Whatcom County Health Department Director, Erika Lautenbach. "Our community has been through so much and sacrificed a lot to protect the health and lives of our neighbors, and our department is working closely with businesses and our economic development partners so we can move together safely into this new phase."

New guidelines in Phase 2 allow for:

- Small social gatherings - inside or outside - are allowed as long as you don't see more than 5 people in a week, who you don't live with.
- Outdoor recreation like camping is allowed as long as it involves 5 or fewer people from outside your household. (Check with campgrounds and recreation facilities for any additional rules and restrictions.)
- More businesses and services can reopen with restrictions, including remaining manufacturing and construction activity, domestic services such as nannies and house cleaners, retail stores, real estate services, professional services, nail salons, barbers, and pet grooming.
- Restaurants can open at 50% capacity, but without bar seating.

Healthy habits will continue to be very important to prevent outbreaks as residents begin to gather, shop, and go out to restaurants. Moving into Phase 2 means that there are now more opportunities for disease transmission. It is imperative everyone continues to do their part by practicing social distancing, wearing face coverings, washing hands frequently, and adhering to the Phase 2 guidelines.

All Whatcom County residents are advised to continue to:



- Stay six feet away from other people outside their household.
- Wear a cloth face covering in public, as outlined by Dr. Stern's Health Directive.
- Practice frequent handwashing and use hand sanitizer.

Whatcom County will need to successfully remain in Phase 2 for three weeks before applying for Phase 3. It's possible Whatcom County could see a return to Phase 1 restrictions if there is a significant increase in cases or other benchmarks are not maintained. Every resident of Whatcom County has a role to play in making Phase 2 successful and allowing our community to move to Phase 3 as quickly as possible.

More information about the Safe Start plan is available from the state's COVID-19 website.

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