



NEWS *from* Clatsop County

Clatsop County Manager's Office
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MEDIA CONTACT:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, March 11, 2022

MASK-WEARING OPTIONAL WITH LIFTING OF MANDATE MARCH 12

The State of Oregon's mandate on mask-wearing in most public spaces expires at midnight on Friday, March 11.

The move follows a dramatic decline in the spread of COVID-19 statewide and a drop in COVID-related hospitalizations. But while this is welcome news, the Clatsop County Public Health Department urges residents to remember that the virus is still among us and to respect the choices of individuals when it comes to mask-wearing.

The mandate remains in place for healthcare settings and transportation, including bus, train and air travel. The list of covered healthcare settings [is available at this link](#).

"We appreciate the community's patience throughout the pandemic and are pleased that starting Saturday, March 12, masks will be optional in most situations," Public Health Director Margo Lalich said. "We realize and respect that our community has diverse needs and that a healthy and safe environment may mean different things to different people. We encourage people to continue to be respectful of individual choices."

People may wear masks because of compromised immunity, or they may live or care for someone who has fragile health and/or may not be eligible for vaccination.

Businesses not covered by the continued mandate on healthcare and transportation will be able to set their own policies on masking for customers and employees, and can continue to require masks if they choose.

Clatsop County is offering no-cost "Masks are Welcome" signs for download from its website, for posting at businesses and other settings where masks will no longer be mandated. [Go to this link](#).

The mask mandate is also being lifted for public schools. Clatsop County school districts will communicate with families about their particular post-mandate policies.

"Earlier in the pandemic, we committed that our community's children would be able to safely return to school ready to learn," Lalich said. "That time has come and we continue working closely with school communities to ensure children and teachers are in a safe environment."

[More on masking and businesses and schools is available here](#).

Public Health is continuing to monitor COVID-19 cases in the community, but because more people have access to at-home COVID testing, the number of officially reported cases may not reflect the full picture of the pandemic. For that reason, the department urges residents to get vaccinated, including a booster shot.

Clatsop County has achieved an overall vaccination rate of 73.6 percent of its total population, but the number of people who have received booster doses lags. Booster rates range from 64 percent for ages 65-plus to 16 percent for 18-19-year-olds.

First and second doses and booster shots are available at vaccination outreach events and at the Public Health Office, 820 Exchange St., Astoria. [Go here for more information](#).

Current recommendations still call for all confirmed and presumptive cases, including asymptomatic cases, to stay home and away from other people at least five days since their symptom onset has passed, and until 24 hours after fever is gone without use of antipyretics, and other COVID-19 symptoms are improving. Cases should also wear a mask when they are around other people in the 10 days after they become sick or test positive, whichever happened first.



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The Public Information Call Center – (503) 325-8500 – is available to answer questions and schedule no-cost testing Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Other COVID related updates and information are available on the county website, www.co.clatsop.or.us.

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