

Readers wonder whether to keep wearing mask

Dana Sparks Eugene Register-Guard | USA TODAY NETWORK

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released new mask guidance earlier this month, followed quickly by new rules from Gov. Kate Brown, and then more detailed rules from state officials – leaving Oregonians flummoxed about when to cover and when to breathe free. Here are some answers to reader questions:

Question: Who is considered fully vaccinated?

A: A person is considered fully vaccinated against the coronavirus two weeks after getting the second Pfizer or Moderna shot or two weeks after receiving the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Q: Where do I still have to wear a mask?

A: The Oregon Health Authority still requires masks (with or without a vaccine) in:

- Health care settings.
- Adult jails and correctional facilities.
- Shelters and transitional housing.
- K-12 schools.
- Planes, buses, trains and other forms of transportation and transportation hubs, such as airports and bus stations.

People who are fully vaccinated are not required to wear a mask indoors in public settings where vaccination status is checked.

However, the state requires businesses, employers and faith institutions to continue requiring everyone to wear masks unless they review each person's proof of vaccination.

Mask requirements no longer apply to anyone outdoors, OHA said, but the agency recommends people continue



Mike Murphy, owner of Pedego Electric Bikes Eugene, rolls out a rental bike at his shop on East Fifth Avenue. CHRIS PIETSCH/EUGENE REGISTER-GUARD

wearing a mask in crowded areas and large gatherings, such as sporting events, and to maintain physical distance as much as possible.

Q: Can the state really authorize verifying vaccination records?

A: Requiring people to disclose their vaccination status does not violate health privacy laws because there is the option of leaving their mask on, said

Dean Sidelinger, the state epidemiologist.

"That is not a violation of HIPAA or privacy since they're voluntarily disclosing that information," he said.

Q: How do you verify vaccination?

A: "Proof of vaccination status" means documentation provided by a tribal, federal, state or local government or a health care provider.

The document must include an individual's name, date of birth, type of COVID-19 vaccination given, dates given and the name/location of the health care provider or site where the vaccine was administered, according to OHA.

Documentation may include, but is not limited to, a physical copy or digital picture of the vaccination record card.

Q: If a business doesn't want to verify vaccination status, then what?

A: If a business is not capable of or does not want to verify each individual's vaccination status, then it must require masks or face coverings for anyone age 5 and older. Accommodations such as delivery or drive-up pickup can be offered to individuals with disabilities.

Q: Are any businesses checking vaccination status?

A: There have been no public reports of national chains checking individual customers' vaccine status. Several, including Fred Meyer, have said they will comply with Oregon's new rules by continuing to require masks for everyone.

Outside of Salem, Enchanted Forest announced it would reopen and check vaccine status – and then within hours announced it would not reopen after receiving a barrage of social media criticism.

Q: Do the mask rules have anything to do with Marion County being 'high risk'?

A: No, the statewide risk level framework, created to reduce transmission and protect Oregonians from COVID-19 until vaccines can be widely distributed, sets rules on what activities are permitted and gathering sizes.

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Miller

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Northwest indigenous tribes, that makes the illegal stocking of bass in the Coquille, as well as other rivers a desecration of sorts.

Just a thought.

Another random musing

Is it just me, or do you get the impression that nurseries and garden centers receive three deliveries of veggie starts heading into growing season.

The first arrives for the grand openings in early April to sucker new arrivals from warmer climes, and for long-time Oregonians in the first flush of spring fever.

Those are wiped out of nascent garden plots and planter beds by the inevitable late frost.

The second is after overnight lows hover in the mid- to high-40s.

Just before the spring rains that inspire a cicada-level invasion of long dormant slugs.

You go out the morning after nature's free watering to find that the pepper and vine plants such as zukes, squash, etc. are now a clearcut forest of inch-high stems.

And finally, with a picket line of slug pellets protecting the third planting, things finally take off.

Unless there's a hailstorm.

There used to be a term for things that you buy that have an expected lifespan, such as computers or appliances. It's called planned obsolescence.

For Oregon gardeners, the operative phrase is 'fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me; fool me

three times, I'm buying a greenhouse.'

This week's highlights

Item 1: Anticipation is growing, according to charter operators, for the hatchery coho salmon season that opens June 12 off the central Oregon coast with an earlier opener and larger number of salmon in the allowed total catch than recent years For salmon seasons online: [2021_Ocean_Sport_Salmon_1_page.pdf](https://2021.Ocean_Sport_Salmon_1_page.pdf) (state.or.us)

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Tradewinds Charters: (800) 445-8730. Website: www.tradewindscharters.com

Newport
Newport Marina Store & Charters: (541) 867-4470. Website: www.nmscharters.com

Newport Tradewinds: (541) 265-2101. Website: www.newporttradewinds.com

Yaquina Bay Charters: (541) 265-6800. Website: www.yaquinabaycharters.com

Item 2: Trout stocking is moving to higher-elevation lakes and ponds with the warming weather in the Willamette Valley.

Check out faves such as Detroit, Foster and Green Peter reservoirs, especially to bat cleanup on trout that were delivered during the run-up to the Memorial Day weekend. Latest information is online at: Fishing | Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (myodfw.com)

Quote of the week: Re: long-winded anglers and hunters: "I like a good story well told. That is the reason I am sometimes forced to tell them myself." Mark Twain

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Detroit Mayor Jim Trett shows the temporary membrane water filtration system in Detroit, Oregon on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. BRIAN HAYES / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Detroit drinking water has returned, seven months later

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Detroit is a city defined by water. Water from the North Santiam River, surrounding streams and Detroit Lake have been key to the city's development and economy.

But for 7 1/2 months following the wildfires, Detroit was without drinking water.

Over the past few years, Detroit had focused on replacing the city's water distribution system, some of which was part of the original town and moved with the city in 1952.

It was so plagued with problems, including leaks, that the city was losing more than a million gallons of treated water each month.

Between 2019 and the summer of 2020, the distribution pipes were replaced in a \$3.2 million project funded by a grant from Business Oregon and raising water rates to \$60 from \$45 per month for customers.

"That was in and it was just completed," Mayor Jim Trett said. "The company that did it had to repave some streets, which they were getting ready to do the week after the fire hit."

When the Lionshead Fire ripped through the city on Sept. 8, it destroyed the water filtration facility and the reservoir. And it impacted the water quality of Breitenbush River and Mackey Creek, the two sources of the city's drinking water.

When people were allowed to return to Detroit, Marion County supplied water on a temporary basis for the city's remaining few residents.

Needing a temporary solution, the city purchased a membrane water filtration system from Westec, but it still required months of site work to place and house the new pump so it won't freeze.

To pay for it, the city was given a \$1 million grant from USDA, and got a grant for a temporary 200,000-gallon reservoir.

But once the temporary system was installed in March, it took weeks of testing for contaminants to determine if it was safe.

Some were found, and sections of pipe had to be replaced.

"For me, mine was intact so they just turned it on and said run your water for 15 minutes," said Trett, one of the few homeowners whose house wasn't destroyed by the fire. "I am still thinking I am going to have it tested just to be sure."

Finally, in late April, drinkable water was returned to homes in Detroit.

"I got water. Thank you, Jim," said Dave Walery as he cleared brush from his Detroit property.

But there's still a problem. The capacity of the water filtration system is less than it has been.

Until the permanent solutions, including a larger membrane water filtration system and water reservoir – which will be paid for by FEMA – are installed in a year and a half to two years, Detroit is asking residents and visitors to conserve.

"Right now we're fine," Trett said. "As more people come back, that's going to create a problem in terms of sustaining what's there. We're asking people to conserve."

Trett said the city is asking residents not to water their lawns and plants during the summer months. He said that will remain the case until the new water filtration system is in place in 2022 or 2023.

Bill Poehler covers Marion County for the Statesman Journal. Contact him at bpoebler@statesmanjournal.com or [Twitter.com/bpoebler](https://twitter.com/bpoebler)



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