

Virus: 14-day quarantine advised for travelers going out of state

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Wednesday and extends to Dec. 2, restrictions will be placed on a wide range of business and social life.

Social events, like Thanksgiving gatherings, will be limited to six people from no more than two households. The governor has instructed the Oregon State Police to begin working with local law enforcement to limit social gatherings and use their discretion to enforce the restriction as a Class C misdemeanor.

Restaurants and bars will be limited to takeout and delivery only. Indoor recreational and entertainment facilities, including theaters, museums, pools, gyms, sports courts and hosting venues, will close. Outdoor recreational facilities, such as zoos, gardens, aquariums and pools, will also close.

Faith-based gatherings will be limited to 25 people indoors or 50 people outdoors.

Indoor visits to long-term care facilities will be prohibited.

Capacity at grocery stores, pharmacies, retail stores and malls will be limited to 75%.

Businesses will be mandated to close offices to the public and instruct employees to work from home if possible.

The order does not apply to health and safety protocols for personal services, such as barber shops, hair salons and nonmedical massage therapy.

The order also does not affect homeless shelters, outdoor recreation and sports, youth programs, child care, K-12 schools and sports, college and professional athletics exemptions and higher education.

The governor said the executive order will be reassessed after two weeks, adding that it may take some counties longer than others to slow the transmission of the virus.

Earlier Friday, Brown and the governors of California and Washington state issued new travel advisories.

Travelers going out of state are urged to quarantine for 14 days upon their return home.

The advisory defines essential travel as travel for work and study, critical infrastructure support, economic services and supply chains, health, immediate medical care and safety and security.

Nonessential travel should be canceled or delayed.

Local impact

Before the new restrictions, Brown had placed a two-week pause on social activities in nine counties, including the Portland metro area.

Clatsop County was on the state's coronavirus watch list in October after a surge of virus cases linked to the Labor Day holiday and an outbreak at Pacific Seafood in Warrenton. The county was removed from the watch list in late October, but has seen an increase in cases over the past few weeks.

Astoria Mayor Bruce Jones said he hopes the community can emerge from the pandemic with one of the best records for health and safety, with as few hospitalizations and deaths as possible.

"Unfortunately, despite this surge being predicted months ago, there is no national testing strategy or comprehensive national plan for combating the coronavirus epidemic, nor is there any expectation for any such plans to be put into place prior to Jan. 20," Jones said in an email.

"My preference would have been for the state to implement a regionalized approach based on local conditions, since Clatsop County's caseload per 100,000 is among the lowest in the state. However, the rise in cases is so large and rapid both nationally and in parts of Oregon

that it is unrealistic to expect that to continue this winter without some additional measures."

Ann Kischner, an owner of Bridgewater Bistro in Astoria, said she was surprised to learn the news about the new restrictions.

She said Thanksgiving is the restaurant's busiest holiday of the year. "It's a huge, huge day for us and our staff depends on it," Kischner said. "It was going to be money in the bank for our servers with gratuities, and keeps our staff fully employed this month as we get ready for it."

David Reid, the executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber is worried about the climbing number of virus cases.

"We want to encourage businesses to comply to the greatest extent that they possibly can, look to us for any help that we can possibly provide," he said. "But this is also now on the consumers, so as consumers it is going to be harder for us to shop local, especially for the next couple of weeks. And we owe it to our community to do that extra work, to wait in line, to do curbside pick up, to make appointments, to do whatever it takes to still support our local businesses."

Reid expects affected businesses will have a bad reaction to the new restrictions, particularly restaurants, bars and gyms.

"We will continue asking questions and trying to get evidence that these measures are actually going to be effective and worth the cost," he said. "But in lack of anything else, we're going to see a spike that's going to have repercussions, not only to our health care community, but to all of our communities. So we definitely support trying to slow this virus down."

Gary Warner is a reporter for the Oregon Capital Bureau.

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During pandemic, local volunteers work to ensure at-risk children are safe: Clatsop CASA welcomes five new CASA volunteers



Pictured above: Executive Director, Nakesha Womble with her son Jackson; Program Manager, Francesca Lazzari; New CASA Volunteers: Cindy Benson, Heather Kelez, Brooke Terry, Loren Candela and Sandy Fuller.

The Clatsop CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Program is pleased to announce that on Friday, October 30th, five new CASA volunteers joined other dedicated CASA community volunteers in serving abused and neglected children in Clatsop County. Judge Dawn McIntosh conducted the virtual ceremony to swear in: Loren Candela, Sandy Fuller, Brooke Terry, Heather Kelez, Lucinda (Cindy) Benson, who have undergone more than 35 hours of training in order to be able to effectively advocate for maltreated children. The fabulous group is pictured above!

The Clatsop CASA Program conducts trainings for new CASAs twice a year. The next training will start March 3, 2021. If you are interested in getting on the training list or finding out more about how you can advocate for children in need, please contact Chelsea Harper or Nakesha Womble, by calling 503-338-6063, emailing casa@clatsopcasa.org, or visiting our website: www.clatsop-casa.org.

Child abuse and neglect is on the rise in the face of this pandemic, as families are put under more financial and emotional stress. Children are no longer in the public eye—they may not be at schools or daycare, or in other locations where caring individuals would be able to spot signs of abuse. OUR group of volunteers in Clatsop County is working hard to ensure that abuse and neglect do not go unnoticed.

