

State issues emergency order for health insurance companies

The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services issued a new emergency order for health insurance companies during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The order requires health insurance companies to:

- Provide at least a 60-day grace period to pay any past due premiums
- Pay claims for any covered services during the first 30 days of the grace

period

- Extend all deadlines for reporting claims and other communications, and provide members with communication options that meet physical distancing standards

“It is encouraging to see the state’s health insurers step up to support both their customers and health care providers during this time,” said Andrew Stolfi,

insurance commissioner and DCBS acting director. “Providing grace periods and paying claims will provide peace of mind for Oregonians and help health care providers get paid for these essential services when they need it the most.”

The order enables Oregonians to continue receiving health insurance coverage and have their claims paid.

It also ensures health care providers receive payment for the services they are diligently providing their patients as the COVID-19 outbreak continues to disrupt everyone’s daily lives and the state’s ordinary course of business.

The order is in effect through June 3 and can be extended in 30-day increments during the course of the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is important to note, this order does not apply to self-insured plans. The state encourages self-insured plans to follow these same guidelines.

These are plans in which an employer assumes the financial risk of providing health care benefits to its employees.

Oregonians who have a self-insured plan should check with their employer

about their coverage options.

If you have questions about your insurance coverage, contact your insurance provider. If you have questions about a health insurance company or agent or need to file a complaint, call the Division of Financial Regulation’s advocacy team at 888-877-4894 (toll-free) or visit dfr.oregon.gov.

Ehler *from A1*

“It was important for him to be part of that active group,” said Mayor Jeff Gowing. “I think just having a sense of pride in your community and doing something positive is what drove him.”

Gowing said he remembers first meeting Ehler in 1989 as both were members of the Cottage Grove branch of the civic group the JayCees (or Junior Chamber of Commerce).

“We both rode motorcycles and got to be friends,” Gowing recalled. “Over the years, we got to be good enough friends that I got to be best man at his last wedding.”

Gowing held a moment of silence for Ehler at the beginning of Monday’s city council meeting and spoke to Ehler’s legacy.

“He was a very unique guy ... He was the only guy I knew who could wear a cowboy hat, a biker vest, Navajo turquoise conchos and cowboy boots all at the same time and pull it off,” Gowing said. “And he did it not to be any part of a group. He did it because that’s who Bob was. He just lived his life to be himself and that’s an attribute a lot

of people should have and take from Bob. I think the world would be a lot better place if we all lived like that.”

Gowing said Ehler had always been involved in an array of community services, including planting trees on downtown Main Street and on Highway 99 through his association with the JayCees.

Following the dissolution of that group, Ehler turned his attention to Bohemia Mining Days.

Bohemia Mining Days organizer Cindy Weeldreyer also first met Ehler in the JayCees and recalled, in 2017, Ehler was pinned with the Bohemia City Marshal’s badge, succeeding the previous marshal Gary Williams and becoming the third marshal in the festival’s history.

“Bob loved Bohemia Mining Days,” said Weeldreyer. “He gladly accepted the opportunity to succeed Gary as the marshal.”

Ehler would accompany Weeldreyer as a festival ambassador to help with promotion and continued to embrace his role throughout each event, as in his participation in photo contests.

“One of his most enjoyable duties as the marshal

was to have his photo taken in selfies with festival-goers,” Weeldreyer said, describing how winners of the photo contest would be awarded with a free Domino’s pizza. “So Bob was eagerly sought out.”

As marshal, Ehler even got his own vehicle in the accompanying parade.

“He loved waving at people,” Weeldreyer recalled. “He was loved by our production team. He was just a real team player. And he will be sadly missed.”

Ehler had also been involved in the local donation group Pay It Forward for years where he dedicated countless hours to building, repairing and distributing more than 1,000 bikes for children and others in need.

Based on the skills he honed, Ehler even began teaching a bike repair class at Lane Community College.

Though the topic of what to do with Ehler’s councilor seat will be raised at the June 8 City Council meeting, Gowing expressed a hope that the seat would remain empty until November.

“I would just as soon finish out the year in Bob’s honor without that seat,” he said. “Just keep it vacant

and let the election decide who would represent Ward 2.”

While family members will remember Ehler’s “open road” approach to life, community members

will remember him for his service to the small town he called home.

“Bob loved Cottage Grove, Oregon,” said Weeldreyer. “He was so proud to be a city councilor and

to give bikes to kids that needed one.”

A small family gathering in Ehler’s honor is planned to be held privately.



NOTICE TO CUT OR REMOVE TALL GRASS – HAZARDOUS VEGETATION – COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL

Notice is hereby given that property owners or persons in control of property are required in the City of Cottage Grove to cut or remove tall grass, hazardous vegetation and combustible materials during the fire season from **June 15th to November 1st** (CGMC 8.12 Nuisances).

Tall grass and hazardous vegetation includes: wild blackberry bushes, weeds & grass more than 12 inches tall anywhere on your property, including public lands out to the street. Vegetation that is likely to endanger buildings or other property should it catch on fire must also be cut or removed.

During the fire season inspections will be made and property owners notified that they must cut or remove the hazardous vegetation. Failure to cut or remove the grass or vegetation will result in the City having to abate the problem. The cost of abatement will be charged to the property and if unpaid will become a lien against the property.

Property owners are reminded that they must keep hazardous vegetation and tall grass cut less than 12 inches until **November 1st**. Questions can be answered by the Public Works & Development Department at City Hall, by calling 541-942-3340 or by email: planning@cottagegrove.org.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Are you ready?

Wildfire Awareness Month Focusses on Making Homes Safe from Wildfire

May is Wildfire Awareness Month in Oregon, and federal, state and firefighting agencies are encouraging Oregonians to make sure their homes and property are protected from wildfire.

The Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal and Keep Oregon Green, in collaboration with Oregon forest protective associations, the Office of Emergency Management and federal wildland agencies, are taking this opportunity to promote defensible space around homes before fire strikes this summer. With many Oregonians spending more time at home because of statewide efforts to control the spread of COVID-19, residents can use the coming weeks to reduce risks and make their homes and communities safer.

“The roof is one of the most critical parts of the house when it comes to wildfire protection,” says Oregon State Fire Marshal Jim Walker. “Embers can collect and ignite on the roof, in gutters and enter unscreened openings around the house. Non-combustible roofing material is preferred. Regardless of the construction, please keep your roofs, gutters and eaves clear of all leaves, pine needles and other flammable debris.”

To reduce the risk, fire officials suggest removing dead vegetation a minimum of 30 feet around homes and other structures. In most cases, trees and healthy plants do not need to be removed. However, trees should be pruned and grass kept short and green to keep fire on the ground and more manageable by fire crews. Maintain a five-foot fire-free area closest to the home using non-flammable landscaping material and fire resistant plants.

“Defensible space is a property’s first line of defense against wildfire,” says Oregon Department of Forestry Fire Prevention Coordinator Tom Fields. “Creating and maintaining defensible space around homes can improve your property’s likelihood of surviving a wildfire. Having defensible space also makes it safer for firefighters who may have to defend someone’s home.”

Homeowners should also consider access issues for large fire trucks. Long driveways should be at least 12 feet wide, have 10 feet of vegetation clearance from the

centerline out, and about 14 feet overhead. Large vehicle turnaround areas are critical for your safety as well as firefighter safety.

Should a fire occur near a community, Oregon Office of Emergency Management Director Andrew Phelps encourages residents to be prepared if an evacuation is necessary. “Wildfires can come without warning and move quickly, so residents need to prepare now in case they have to leave their home,” Phelps said. “Make sure to put together a ‘Go Kit,’ register for emergency notification systems in your community and make a plan where

your family will go and how you will stay in contact if evacuated.”

It is the homeowner’s responsibility to protect their homes by building defensible space. For more information, visit the websites for the Office of State Fire Marshal, the Office of Emergency Management, Keep Oregon Green and the Oregon Department of Forestry, or call your nearest ODF or forest protective association office.

Additional information on preparing for wildfires can be found on the Ready.gov website.



PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

