

Oregon adjusts guidelines for wearing masks and physical distancing indoors and outdoors

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) on May 18 released updated guidance about mask and physical distancing requirements

for individuals fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Under the updated guidance, people who are fully vaccinated will no longer

be required to wear a mask indoors, in most public settings where vaccination status is checked.

In public settings where vaccination status is not checked, masks will still be required.

Finally, businesses and venue operators remain free to establish their own, more restrictive policies regarding mask usage.

In addition to exempting people who are fully vaccinated from mask requirements in most indoor settings, OHA health experts announced that mask requirements no longer apply to anyone who is outdoors.

However, OHA recommends that individuals continue to wear a mask or face covering in crowded areas and large gatherings (such as sporting events), and to maintain physical distance as much as possible.

OHA urges unvaccinated individuals and those at risk for complications to wear masks in these settings.

The new guidance comes after the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Pre-

vention (CDC) last week announced that individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 could stop wearing masks and stop physical distancing in most public spaces.

Oregon's Governor Kate Brown pointed to the CDC announcement as "another sign that as more people become fully vaccinated, the closer we are to ending this pandemic."

OHA Director Patrick Allen said, "Masks continue to save lives and protect people who are not vaccinated. However, last week's announcement from the CDC emphasizes the point that safe and effective vaccines are the very best way to protect people from getting and spreading COVID." He added, "That's why it's safer for life to look more like normal for people who are fully vaccinated. And why people who haven't had a chance to get vaccinated should do so as soon as they can."

The new Oregon guidance says:

Individuals in Oregon are no longer required to wear a face mask or phys-

ically distance, whether indoors or outdoors, two weeks after their final COVID-19 vaccination dose. A "fully vaccinated individual" is a person who has received both doses of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or one dose of a single-dose vaccine and at least 14 days have passed since the individual's final dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

However, fully vaccinated individuals are required to continue wearing a mask and observe physical distancing on public transportation and in schools, hospitals and clinics, homeless shelters, youth and adult correctional facilities and long-term care facilities.

Businesses, employers and faith institutions can choose to no longer require masks and physical distancing for fully vaccinated individuals or continue to require masks and physical distancing in their locations for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status.

If a business, employer or faith institution chooses to no longer require masks


and physical distancing, the business, employer or faith institution must require visitors to show proof of vaccination and review the proof of vaccination. In that case, a business would need to have a policy for checking the vaccination status of customers and employees if they are not wearing masks. Fully vaccinated individuals would need to provide proof they'd been vaccinated if they want to remove face coverings and not observe physical distancing guidelines.

In addition, state health experts announced that face coverings are no longer required outdoors (regardless of vaccination status).

OHA strongly recommends that people who are not vaccinated and people who are at high risk of severe COVID-19 disease continue to wear face coverings and physically distance in outdoor crowded areas and large gatherings.

More information about vaccinations in Oregon is available at covidvaccine.oregon.gov.

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Water supply and drought webinar

The Portland National Weather Service held a water supply and drought webinar for the State of Oregon last week.

The agency reported that the months of March and April were record dryness and they are projecting May to be dry, too.

For Lane County, they are projecting this summer to be a severe to

extreme drought. The weather service has also projected local stream flows to be 25 to 50 percent lower than normal flows.

If the National Weather Service is correct, this will be a very dry and warm summer, which will increase the risk of fires.

Cottage Grove residents are encouraged to take the time now to

mow tall grass and reduce dry and dead woody material on property.

Last year, the fire danger started earlier than normal and the use of mowers and power equipment was prohibited.

This year is aligning to be the same, if not worse.

A link to the recorded webinar on YouTube can be found here: youtu.be/FZq-WYdGKYk.

Mayor's Bike Ride returning in June

Grovers should mark their calendars and get bicycles tuned up in preparation for the Mayor's Bike Ride on Saturday, June 19, 2021 at 10 a.m.

Join Mayor Jeff Gowing for a bicycle ride on the Row River Trail from Trailhead Park at 10th and Main out to the Mosby Creek Trailhead.

At the Mosby Creek Trailhead, there will be treats and riders can return to the city or continue on the trail.

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