

## LOCAL, STATE &amp; REGION

## COVID-19 in Oregon

## Mask requirements are unlikely to return even in areas with flare-ups

BY AIMEE GREEN

The Oregonian

As Oregon counts down the days until Gov. Kate Brown lifts coronavirus restrictions, one of the state's top health officials said Friday it's highly unlikely mask requirements would return even in the event of outbreaks in counties with low vaccination rates.

Brown has pledged to lift mask requirements in all but a few situations when 70% of Oregonians 18 and older are at least partially vaccinated, which is projected to happen later this month.

Dr. Dean Sidelinger, Oregon's epidemiologist and health officer, said he doubts the Oregon Health Authority would recommend reinstating mask requirements and other COVID-19 safety precautions down the road. "But I don't want to take anything off the table if the situation dramatically changes," he said.

Some counties with a history of significant coronavirus spread now have vaccination rates as low as 35% among those 16 and older. Sidelinger acknowledged that even if the governor continued to mandate masks for unvaccinated people, it might not do any good.

"Even a requirement," Sidelinger said, "isn't necessarily going to get people to wear masks."

Sidelinger's comments Friday make clear that the change, first announced by Brown the week before, is expected to be permanent. Neither vaccinated nor unvaccinated people



The "Umbrella Man" statue in downtown Portland's Pioneer Square wears a face mask in April 2020. Masks have been a flashpoint throughout the pandemic. Meanwhile, the number of new known infections has been declining for the past month or so.

Dave Killen/  
The Oregonian file

will be required to wear masks when Oregon hits the 70% threshold.

The issue of masks has often been divisive throughout the pandemic and, while shown to be effective at reducing transmission, has remained a flashpoint for some.

According to a New York Times tracker, most states that have reopened don't require masks for the unvaccinated or vaccinated in almost all situations. At least eight reopened states — including New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois — are still requiring unvaccinated people to wear masks indoors, based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Those states also lifted mask mandates for vaccinated people, except in limited circumstances like in airplanes, because of the CDC guidance.

It's unclear if several other

states that have yet to reopen will require face coverings for those who are unvaccinated, although California says it will.

Earlier Friday, Brown fumbled as she tried to explain how her plan to allow unvaccinated Oregonians to go without masks in most indoor public spaces later this month follows the latest CDC recommendations.

"We have continued to follow science and data and worked very closely with our federal partners, including the CDC regarding masking guidelines," Brown said initially when defending her mask-free policy.

The CDC guidance for unvaccinated people says, in part: "Everyone 2 years and older should wear masks in public," and "Masks should be worn in addition to staying at least 6 feet apart, especially around people who don't live with you."

When asked why she wasn't planning to follow CDC guidance, Brown referred the question to Sidelinger.

"I would recommend that even when we reopen if you're not vaccinated you consider wearing a mask, consider limiting the activities that you take part in because you're not protected," Sidelinger said.

When asked again, Brown seemed to express hope that the CDC might change its mask recommendations in the next few weeks.

"We're waiting to see what the CDC guidelines are going to be as we reopen," Brown said. "We know that they are examining the guidelines for the education system. And I suspect they will be re-examining other masking guidelines. And we will continue to watch to see what the federal agencies, including the CDC do in this arena."

## TODAY

It's Sunday, June 13, the 164th day of 2021. There are 201 days left in the year.

## Today's Highlight in History:

In 1966, the Supreme Court ruled in *Miranda v. Arizona* that criminal suspects had to be informed of their constitutional right to consult with an attorney and to remain silent.

In 1842, Queen Victoria became the first British monarch to ride on a train, traveling from Slough Railway Station to Paddington in 25 minutes.

In 1911, the ballet "Petrouchka," with music by Igor Stravinsky and choreography by Michel Fokine, was first performed in Paris by the Ballets Russes, with Vaslav Nijinsky in the title role.

In 1942, a four-man Nazi sabotage team arrived on Long Island, New York, three days before a second four-man team landed in Florida. All eight men were arrested after two members of the first group defected. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of Strategic Services and the Office of War Information.

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson nominated Solicitor-General Thurgood Marshall to become the first Black justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1971, the New York Times began publishing excerpts of the Pentagon Papers, a secret study of America's involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967 that had been leaked to the paper by military analyst Daniel Ellsberg.

In 1977, James Earl Ray, the convicted assassin of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., was recaptured following his escape three days earlier from a Tennessee prison.

In 1983, the U.S. space probe Pioneer 10, launched in 1972, became the first spacecraft to leave the solar system as it crossed the orbit of Neptune.

In 1996, the 81-day-old Freemen standoff ended as 16 remaining members of the anti-government group surrendered to the FBI and left their Montana ranch.

In 1997, a jury voted unanimously to give Timothy McVeigh the death penalty for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing. The Chicago Bulls captured their fifth NBA championship in seven years with a 90-to-86 victory over the Utah

Jazz in game six.

In 2005, a jury in Santa Maria, California, acquitted Michael Jackson of molesting a 13-year-old cancer survivor at his Neverland ranch. The Supreme Court warned prosecutors to use care in striking minorities from juries, siding with Black murder defendants in Texas and California who contended their juries had been unfairly stacked with whites.

**Ten years ago:** Facing off in New Hampshire, Republican White House hopefuls condemned President Barack Obama's handling of the economy from the opening moments of their first major debate of the 2011-2012 campaign season, and pledged emphatically to repeal his historic year-old health care overhaul.

**Five years ago:** A day after the Orlando, Florida, nightclub shooting rampage that claimed 49 victims, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton offered drastically different proposals for stemming the threat of terrorism and gun violence; Trump focused heavily on the nation's immigration system (even though the shooter was U.S. born) and redoubled his call for temporarily banning Muslims from the United States, while Clinton said that as president she would prioritize stopping "lone wolf" attackers and reiterated her call for banning assault weapons.

**One year ago:** Atlanta's police chief resigned, hours after the fatal police shooting of Rayshard Brooks; protests over the shooting grew turbulent, and the Wendy's restaurant at the scene of the shooting was gutted by flames.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Bob McGrath is 89. Actor Malcolm McDowell is 78. Former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is 77. Singer Dennis Locorriere is 72. Actor Richard Thomas is 70. Actor Jonathan Hogan is 70. Actor Stellan Skarsgard is 70. Comedian Tim Allen is 68. North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper is 64. Actor Ally Sheedy is 59. TV anchor Hannah Storm is 59. Actor Lisa Vidal is 56. Singer David Gray is 53. Singer-musician Rivers Cuomo is 51. Actor Steve-O is 47. Actor Ethan Embry is 43. Actor Chris Evans is 40. Actor Sarah Schaub is 38. Actor Kat Dennings is 35. Actor Ashley Olsen is 35. Actor Mary-Kate Olsen is 35. DJ/producer Gesaffelstein is 34.

—Associated Press

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