

Tips for keeping homes and businesses clean during COVID-19

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

If there's an upside to a global pandemic, it might be that everything is cleaner than usual.

Greg Wilke of Mariposa Cleaning Services in Pendleton said the businesses his service cleans are stepping up their game, sanitizing surfaces every couple of hours and asking cleaners to come in multiple times a week.

"They're being really careful," he said.

There has been conflicting research and advice on exactly how long COVID-19 can live on various surfaces, but it seems the virus can at minimum remain a threat for infection for several hours, and more likely several days. A combination

of hand washing and sanitizing surfaces can help prevent people from accidentally transferring the virus from a door knob to their nose or mouth.

Wilke said surfaces that are touched frequently by multiple people — door handles, light switches, keypads — are most important to sanitize several times a day. His business cleans the less frequently touched areas too, however, and does detail work like vacuuming furnace filters. He has also been trying to help customers stay stocked up on cleaning supplies as the stores continue to run low.

As people buy cleaning supplies they aren't used to using, or substitute common household items, such as bleach or vinegar when

the stores run out, reading labels is an important part of using the products safely and effectively. Bleach, for example, can create dangerous gases when mixed with cleaning products containing ammonia.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gives advice for proper household cleaning on its website. Best practices include wearing gloves while cleaning, washing hard surfaces with soap and water first to remove dirt, and then sanitizing them using an Environmental Protection Agency-approved disinfectant as directed.

"As directed" usually means letting the liquid sit on the surface while it does its work. Spraying a cleaner on a surface, and then immediately wiping it off with a dry

paper towel reduces its effectiveness at killing germs.

Lysol wipes and Clorox wipes, for example, direct users to let the surface remain visibly wet for at least 10 seconds to sanitize the surface, and at least four minutes to disinfect it. (The CDC considers sanitizing reducing germs to a generally "safe" level while disinfecting kills all the germs on a surface).

Stephen Dean is an industrial hygienist in Hermiston, who consults with companies on the best ways to keep workers and customers safe from illnesses like COVID-19. He said businesses should consult the guidelines put out by the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the

workplace.

"Those are best practices from the best hygienists in the industry," he said.

Those guidelines include recommendations, such as cleaning break rooms at least twice per day and providing sanitizing wipes for workers to wipe down their workspace on a regular basis.

Dean said at home, people should take the same sort of precautions in frequently sanitizing surfaces they touch often, particularly with unwashed hands. Those areas can include things like door knobs, steering wheels, keys, cellphones and handles on sinks and showers. People should also avoid sharing things like utensils and water bottles.

If you don't have sanitizing sprays or wipes, washing

hard surfaces with soap and water works great too.

"Hand soap kills the virus," Dean said.

He said germs and allergens can get caught up in furnace and air conditioning filters, so now is a good time to change those too.

If someone sneezes or coughs, those germ-laden droplets often settle onto the floor, where other people can step on them. Dean said people should be taking their shoes off before entering their home where possible to avoid tracking germs into the house. They should also change clothes when they get home from public places like the grocery store.

"You don't want to wear the same clothes at home as you do in public," he said.

Cases

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following social distancing guidelines.

According to the health department, 268 tests total have been conducted in Umatilla County.

The public health department stated in its news release that the state is "still in the middle of a severe cold and flu season" and as such, not everyone with respiratory symptoms needs to be tested.

Patients can be tested at the discretion of their health care provider after other illnesses, such as influenza and pneumonia, have been ruled out, but they may also be told to just rest at home and isolate themselves if their symptoms are mild.

Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, should call their primary care provider before visiting a clinic so that staff can prepare to receive them.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released guidelines last week encouraging everyone to wear a mask in public. Official medical masks such as N95 masks should generally be reserved for health care providers, but homemade cloth masks and makeshift items like bandanas can help prevent people — particularly those with no symptoms who don't realize they are contagious — from spreading the virus into the air when they talk or cough.

Governor Kate Brown encouraged Oregonians to follow CDC guidelines in a recent statement.

"Like every other strategy we have used to address this crisis, wearing homemade masks will only be effective if we all work together," she said.

"Continue to stay home to the maximum extent possible, and add wearing a homemade mask to the list of precautions you are practicing when you go out in public. Make sure you are still abiding by all

the social distancing measures we have in place. And, please only wear homemade masks, not medical masks that are desperately needed by our frontline health care workers treating COVID-19 patients."

According to the Oregon Health Authority, the state has had a total of 1,181 known cases and 33 deaths related to COVID-19 as of Tuesday afternoon. So far 23,007 people have been tested statewide.

Of the reported cases in Oregon, at least 329 COVID-19 patients are hospitalized, while 756 are not and the hospitalization status of 96 cases are unknown to the state. Sixty-nine COVID-19 patients are on a ventilator, and the state currently has 816 ventilators available, according to OHA.

According to a tally kept by the *New York Times* of each state's reported cases, the United States had at least 395,090 confirmed cases since Jan. 21 as of Tuesday afternoon, with at least 12,786 deaths.

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"We wish you could have witnessed the gratitude expressed, and smiles you brought to our staff's faces," the hospital wrote on Facebook.

One of the hospital's neighbors also posted a large sign thanking Good Shepherd staff for their courage in the face of a pandemic.

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Madison Hynes, an agriculture and math teacher at **Riverside Jr./Sr. High School** in Boardman, received one of **Eastern Oregon University's** Inspirational Teacher Awards. The university allows freshmen on the dean's list to nominate a teacher who inspired them on their path, and Hynes was recognized by **Joseph O'Brien**.

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The **city of Umatilla** has closed its public parks to help fight the spread of COVID-19. Parks will be

closed, with the exception of the marina and area trails. City hall and the library are also closed to the public.

The city has been trying to find other ways to infuse some fun into residents' days, however, and is partnering with **Umatilla School District** to send Easter eggs home to students with their homework packets, and to drop off eggs to residents who request them.

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Community Counseling Solutions is offering virtual visits and phone calls to help local residents handle the stressors of COVID-19, including visits with prescribers.

Call 541-676-9161 or visit www.communitycounselingsolutions.org to learn more.

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Banner Bank is working to help customers with current financial burdens by easing some rules for customers affected by COVID-19 shutdowns, including waiving late fees for personal loans and credit cards

and offering payment deferral options for individual customers and businesses.

For more information, contact Banner Bank at 541-567-2291.

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Pendleton Cattle Barons Weekend, set for May 1-2 at the Pendleton Convention Center and Pendleton Round-Up Grounds, has been canceled due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 outbreak.

"We are deeply saddened over the need to postpone this premier event," said Andy VanderPlaat, president of the board of directors, "but we are optimistic that our decision will be a small step in helping our nation recover quickly."

Cattle Barons Weekend expressed their thanks to sponsors, vendors, participants and spectators in bearing with them as all possible options were considered.

Pendleton Cattle Barons' Weekend can be followed at <https://www.cattlebarons.net/> on Facebook and Instagram.

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