

Oregon aims to lift indoor mask mandate next week

By GARY WARNER
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Oregon will drop its indoor mask mandate against COVID-19 more than a week earlier than planned.

Gov. Kate Brown said Monday morning that Oregon, California and Washington state would lift their mandates simultaneously at 11:59 p.m. March 11. The new date includes ending mask mandates in schools. The order will affect over 51.2 million people from the Mexican border to the Canadian border, about 15% of the national population.

The move comes on the two-year anniversary of the first case of COVID-19 reported in Oregon. Working with California and Washington state was crucial to having a unified timeline for the change in mask policy,



R.J. Marx

Sanitizing station in the lobby of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District's Bob Chisholm Center.

Brown said.

"As has been made clear time and again over the last two years, COVID-19 does not stop at state borders or county lines," the governor said in a statement. "On the West Coast, our communities and economies are linked. Together, as we continue to recover from the omicron surge, we will build

resiliency and prepare for the next variant and the next pandemic."

The move by the three states comes after the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention late last week called for new guidelines to determine risk that would allow for the loosening of restrictions for 70% of the country's population

where coronavirus is posing a low or medium threat to hospitals. However, the map released by the CDC showed much of eastern, central and southwestern Oregon remained in the 30% of population areas that remain at high risk.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Washington Gov. Jay Inslee issued similar statements Monday morning with the same date and time for dropping indoor mask mandates.

The new date is the second time in two weeks that health officials have moved up the date to lift mask mandates.

Brown had originally said that the mask mandate would end by March 31, about when Oregon Health & Science University projected the state would drop below 400 daily patients hospitalized with COVID-19.

The decline in omi-

cron-related severe cases accelerated and the date was moved last week to March 19. But late last week, OHSU issued a forecast showing Oregon would dip below the 400-mark by March 12.

The Oregon Health Authority said the lifting of the mask mandate did not include changes to federal and state rules on masks in health care settings, airline flights, public transit and other specialized places.

Brown's statement on Monday did not change her plan to lift the state of emergency on COVID-19 earlier than April 1, the date she announced last week. The emergency rules gave Brown wide powers to set public policy during the crisis, including the closing and reopening of in-person classroom instruction, business hours, mask usage and limits on event sizes.

The three West Coast

states have sought to coordinate on COVID-19 response throughout the pandemic, though they have gone their own way at times, such as the vaccine priority list in early 2021. Brown said the governors believed the mask mandate change was best done at the same time for the stretch from the Mexican border to the Canadian border.

"Our communities and economies are linked," Brown said.

Brown underlined that the move did not mean the pandemic was burning out or nearly over.

"As we learn to live with this virus, we must remain vigilant to protect each other and prevent disruption to our schools, businesses and communities – with a focus on protecting our most vulnerable and the people and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19," she said.

PUBLIC SAFETY



Feb. 18

4:45 a.m., 800 block S. Roosevelt: EMS call.

10:43 a.m., 300 block Fifth Avenue: Caller says a motorhome is causing a parking obstruction in the area.

11:24 a.m., 300 block First Avenue: Caller reports ongoing issue with transient parking in Convention Center public parking.

11:26 a.m. 300 block Fourth Avenue: EMS call.

11:41 a.m., 33000 block Wild Daffodil: Assist another agency.

12:30 p.m., 15th and Holladay: A person is cited for careless driving.

5:57 p.m., Convention Center: A transient in a red car reported lighting sheets of paper on fire and throwing them is advised of their behavior.

11:57 p.m., 1000 block Beach Drive: Police do a welfare check requested by a third party regarding someone who might

self-harm. The person is contacted and says they are not a danger to themselves or others. No further action was taken.

Feb. 19

12:44 a.m., 1700 block Pine Ridge Drive: EMS call.

2:37 a.m., First Avenue: Fire alarm.

10:16 a.m., N. Holladay: Police and firefighters respond to a fire alarm at a hotel.

11:49 a.m., 500 block S. Lincoln: Two people reported arguing loudly say the fight is verbal only. Police warn them of disorderly conduct.

1:12 p.m., 800 block Broadway: A person is arrested on a warrant.

2:56 p.m., N. Roosevelt: Transients accused of doing drugs in the bathroom are found eating cheeseburgers. After being advised of the complaint, they said they would move along.

4:01 p.m., Sunset Beach: Gearhart police are assisted with a traffic stop.

5:58 p.m., 600 block S. Edgewood: Medix, firefighters and police are on scene for an EMS call.

Feb. 20

1:27 a.m., Bridge Tender: A person is accused of trying to start fights with other people.

2:10 a.m., 900 block S. Holladay: A person reported screaming in the Napa Auto Parts lot is warned of disorderly conduct. A case is taken.

2:51 a.m., Library: A person is reported on the property after hours. Police advise them to move along.

5:36 p.m., 1200 block Avenue B: EMS call.

6:02 p.m., 16th and Ocean Shore: Fire investigation.

9:51 p.m., 1200 block S. Holiday: A person is arrested and charged with driving while under the influence of intoxicants.

Feb. 21

5:19 a.m., 2020 block Beach Drive: EMS call.

6:03 a.m., Forest Drive: EMS call.

8:59 a.m., 2100 block Lewis and Clark Road: EMS call.

2:26 p.m., Broadway Park: An assault is reported.

6:45 p.m., 400 block S. Lincoln: EMS call.

Feb. 22

10:47 a.m., 1700 block 12th Avenue: EMS call.

11:20 a.m., 10th and Necanicum: A person is cited for unlawful lodging.

11:45 a.m., 82000 Maple Road: Structure fire reported flames and black smoke.

3:20 p.m., 300 block S. Columbia: Fraud is reported.

5:01 p.m., 11th and Necanicum: Welfare check requested.

10:59 p.m., 10th and Necanicum: Police respond to a report of suspicious activity but on arrival say nothing suspicious is happening.

Feb. 23

2:51 a.m., 1000 block S. Downing: EMS call.

9:00 a.m., 1100 block N. Roosevelt: A disoriented elderly man reported by CMH Urgent Care is reunited with his family.

5:33 p.m., 1100 block Broadway: Caller reports suspicious activity at a vacant house; on contact, the subject clears with police she is allowed to be there.

9:27 p.m., 300 block Ninth Avenue: EMS call.

11:49 p.m., First Avenue: EMS call.

Feb. 24

9:22 a.m., 3100 block Sunset Blvd: An odor of gas/smoke/chemical was reported.

2:01 p.m., 1000 block Beach Drive: Options are given to a caller with questions.

3:42 p.m., N. Prom: A message was delivered.

3:55 p.m., 300 block S. Columbia: EMS call.

10:53 p.m., 800 block Broadway: A disturbance is reported.



ing assisted at the scene. The driver, a Portland man, wasn't injured.

Ice-related crash

On the same stretch of road, U.S. Highway 26 near milepost 8 at 9:03 a.m., another driver encountered ice and slid off the highway. The car came to a stop and both the driver and a passenger left the car, did not report what happened, and continued on to their workplace. Troopers saw the car when responding to the ice-related crash that happened an hour earlier. The owner of the second car told police they'd already called for tow. The business owner said he was unaware of Oregon law regarding crash reporting. Seaside Tow recovered the vehicle.

Car on fire

A car was reported on fire Feb. 22 at 8:58 p.m. on the beach between Sunset Beach and DeLaura Beach. An abandoned and burning blue Ford pickup was located and the fire extinguished by Warrenton firefighters. The Clatsop County Sons of Beaches removed the burned pickup from the beach and Clatsop Towing completed the tow.



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