



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE: Benton County Commissioners, Franklin County Commissioners, and Benton-Franklin Health District

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July 2, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Benton and Franklin Counties were approved today to move to modified Phase 1 of the state's [Safe Start Phased Reopening Plan](#). Washington State Secretary of Health John Weisman's approval of the counties' applications allows limited and modified openings for some businesses and personal activities in Benton and Franklin Counties effective at midnight tonight.

Activities allowed include:

- Construction as permitted in Phase 2 guidance (new construction projects can occur)
- Manufacturing as permitted in Phase 2 guidance (non-essential manufacturing)
- Restaurants for outdoor seating only at 50% of existing outdoor capacity
- In-store retail at 15% indoor capacity with indoor activities limited to 30 minutes
- Personal services at 25% indoor capacity
- Dog groomers at 25% indoor capacity
- No gatherings with people outside of the household except for small behavioral health support groups of 5 people or fewer

Businesses that are allowed to reopen are required to follow the state Department of Health's specific [guidance](#) but must adjust their occupancy to the levels identified above. Before opening, businesses must do the following:

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1. All businesses must sign a [business pledge](#) that they will following all COVID-19 guidance. [Spanish business pledge](#)
2. Complete a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) and submit it by email or in person to Benton or Franklin County. [Spanish COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)
3. Post the COVID-19 Safety Plan at the front of the business
4. Require face coverings for employees and customers
5. Post signs stating that face coverings are required. [English Mask Required Sign](#) [Spanish Mask Required Sign](#)

Plans must be submitted to the county in which the business is licensed.

- Benton County – please email to covidplan@co.benton.wa.us or drop in large yellow postal box in the drive lane at the side of Benton-Franklin Health District.
- Franklin County – please email to covid-19businesssafetyplans@co.franklin.wa.us or use the Franklin County Treasurer drop box located in courthouse parking lot next to security building labeled COVID 19 business plans

Washington Department of Health will continue to closely monitor the status of COVID-19 in Benton and Franklin Counties especially hospitalizations. If hospitalizations for COVID-19 significantly increase throughout the course of implementing this plan, the state will consider a strict lock down of the counties, including closure of nearly all businesses.

The Benton-Franklin Health District Board of Health wants to remind the public to continue to follow all the precautions in Phase 1, including wearing face coverings in public, staying at least six feet away from other people, practicing excellent hand hygiene and staying home when they're sick. More information on COVID-19 can be found on Benton-Franklin Health District's website at www.bfhd.wa.gov/covid-19.

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