

Benton-Franklin Health District
www.bfhd.wa.gov

Kennewick
7102 West Okanogan Place

Pasco
412 West Clark Street

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Benton-Franklin Health District Website
www.bfhd.wa.gov

Washington Department of Health
www.doh.wa.gov

Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Benton and Franklin Counties to move to Phase 3 of the Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery

Kennewick, Wash. – Washington State Governor Jay Inslee announced today that effective March 22, all Washington counties will move to Phase 3 of the [Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery](#). Counties then will be monitored every three weeks, by new metrics, on a county-by-county basis. Changes will be announced every third Monday with any phase change effective that Friday. Benton and Franklin counties will be monitored separately. The new metrics are listed below:

Metrics

Indicator	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
New cases per 100,000 population per 14 days	>350	350-200	<200
New COVID hospitalizations per 100,000 population per 7 days	≥10	9.9-5	<5

The first evaluation of counties for these metrics will be April 12. If a county fails one or more of the metrics, that county will move down one phase April 16. If at any point the *statewide* ICU capacity reaches >90%, *all counties* will move to Phase 1. The Washington State Department of Health maintains the ability to move counties forward or backward at their discretion and as disease activity warrants.

RECOVERY PHASE 3

All Phase 3 changes to business and industry guidance, which will be minor, will be updated in the coming week and added to the [Governor’s site](#) and [Health District web page](#).

Notable changes in Phase 3 include:

- Outdoor activities and indoor events will be allowed at 50% occupancy, up to 400 people maximum, with distancing and masking strictly enforced. Larger venues are capped at 25% capacity or up to 9,000 people, whichever is less, and must follow [spectator guidelines](#).
- Outdoor sports, from high school to professional, will allow spectators at 25% with a possible capacity reassessment and increase coming in April. Distancing and facial coverings are strictly required.
- Youth high risk sports will be allowed to have competitions again.

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- All indoor industries and activities currently allowed can increase to 50% occupancy or 400 people, whichever is less. This includes restaurants, gyms and fitness centers, and movie theatres among others with a full list on the [Governor's site](#).

VACCINE PHASE 1B-2

In vaccine news, all Phase 1B-2 individuals will become eligible March 17. This includes, but is not limited to, high-risk critical workers in industries with congregate settings, agricultural, fishing vessels, food processing, corrections, grocery, public transit, and people 16 years and older who are pregnant or have a disability that puts them at high COVID-19 risk. Eligible individuals are listed [here](#).

Individuals who are over 65 and have not received their vaccine, should get their vaccine now. After March 17, all previous phases are still eligible as phases are additive, but to maintain priority, eligible individuals are encouraged to not wait. All area COVID-19 vaccine providers can be found [here](#).

Local leaders and officials have worked tirelessly with the health jurisdiction administrators and health officers within the South Central region to share feedback to the Governor's office. The group has been focused on optimizing economic viability in the region while continuing to improve the public health through the pandemic response.

"We are grateful and encouraged to be heard and recognized for the progress that our region, our counties, and our state are making in reducing transmission of COVID-19 while also supplying vaccine to those who are at most risk," said Jason Zaccaria, administrator for Benton-Franklin Health District. "While this next phase is another step in getting our community open and economically healthier, we continue to stress the importance of making sure everyone does their part in ensuring we prevent backwards movement with disease spread and hospitalizations," he said. "While we can all celebrate this movement toward normalcy, we need to do so safely and, when it's our turn, we all need to get vaccinated."

Benton-Franklin Health District continues to urge residents to stay home if you are ill, avoid others unless you need urgent medical attention, get a free COVID-19 test, and cooperate with public health officials if you are called. Local information and resources are available on the District website at <https://covid19.bfhd.wa.gov>.

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