



Teton County Health Department

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Press Release Reopening the Big Sky Phased Approach

Today at noon, Montana Governor Steve Bullock announced a plan to lift the stay at home order. The plan is a phased approach that opens up the majority of businesses and agencies across the state over the next few weeks. The Teton County Health Department encourages everyone to review the Governor's plan on the State of Montana's Joint Information Center webpage here: <https://covid19.mt.gov/joint-information-center>.

The Teton County Health Department expects that Teton County businesses and residents alike will have many questions about what this means for our communities. Health Department staff will be reaching out to businesses and agencies over the next few days to help them interpret this guidance and implement strategies to protect themselves and others. As our community moves forward with reopening, all residents in Teton County have a responsibility to continue to protect each other. Here are a few key points.

Reopening means that we will likely see new COVID-19 cases in Montana. If we get cases in Teton County, we will continue to use public health strategies such as isolation, quarantine, and contact tracing to reduce the spread of illness and limit any outbreaks. In order for our community to remain open, it will be vital that individuals cooperate with these public health safeguards. We encourage everyone to keep track of places they go and people they are around to make contact investigations more effective.

Social distancing saves lives. The loosening of the Governor's stay at home directive does not mean that COVID-19 has gone away. While businesses are reopening, we still want to encourage people to use the same strategies to reduce the spread of illness as they have been using for the last several weeks – maintain at least 6ft of distance between you and others, stay at home when sick, limit gatherings to 10 people or less, wash your hands often, and wear a mask in public places.

Employers will take steps to protect their employees. As businesses and employees get back to work, the health department will help them identify strategies that will best protect their workers. Some of these strategies may include continuing telework, staggering employee work schedules, increasing hygiene and sanitation, monitoring or screening employees for illness symptoms, closing common areas to increase physical distance between employees, making special accommodations for high-risk employees, and encouraging employees and patrons to wear masks.



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Support our local businesses by acting responsibly and respecting their rules. COVID-19 has had a huge impact on all of our local businesses in Teton County, and everyone is eager to support our local businesses through this tough time. Businesses will now be tasked with taking precautions to help their patrons stay safe and healthy. Businesses will work with local public health to make plans and take actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 while operating, such as reduced occupancy, spacing out seating, and increase sanitation. As a supportive patron of these businesses, you should be aware of the rules and strategies they have implemented, and follow them respectfully.

Protect the most vulnerable people in our community. The Governor's plan continues to prohibit visitation to long-term care facilities. The new guidance also indicates that vulnerable populations should still stay at home. This includes individuals over the age of 65 and those of any age with serious underlying health conditions. We encourage all community members to consider how their actions impact vulnerable individuals in our community, and continue to provide them with care and support in a safe manner, such as calling them regularly, and bringing them groceries or supplies.

Businesses are encouraged to contact the Teton County Health Department at 466-2562 with questions about when they can reopen and how to operate their business again in a safe manner.

The Teton County Health Department appreciates the on-going cooperation of our community members.