

June 5, 2020

**CATEGORY:** News Release

**RELEASE DATE:** For Immediate Release

**REGARDING:** Phase 3 Approval - Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties

**Background:**

Washington's "Stay Home-Stay Healthy" order ended May 31, 2020 with the transition to the expanded "Safe Start-Washington's Phased Reopening Plan." This plan moves the state through a phased reopening on a county-by-county basis which allows counties already in Phase 2 to move into Phase 3 when key readiness indicators are met, approval is given, and a minimum of three weeks in Phase 2 has been completed.

Previously, Northeast Tri County Health District (NETCHD) submitted the request to advance to Phase 2. The request to advance to Phase 2 was approved with Ferry and Pend Oreille Counties authorized to advance on May 8<sup>th</sup> and Stevens County on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, all three counties applied for advancement to Phase 3. With this application, information was submitted that detailed readiness in the key areas of:

- Incidences of new COVID-19 cases with a target of less than 25 cases per 100,000 in the prior 14 days;
- COVID-19 testing availability and accessibility;
- Ability of local public health staff at NETCHD to complete case investigations;
- Ability of each county to provide supporting services for isolation and quarantine to those that cannot otherwise do so on their own; and
- Capacity of NETCHD to respond to outbreaks.

See <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/what-you-need-know/safe-start> for additional information regarding the "Safe Start" reopening plan.

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## Response from Washington State Department of Health:

Today, June 5, 2020 we received the announcement that **Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties have been approved to advance into Phase 3**. It is important to stress that businesses listed in Phase 3 or currently open in Phase 2 must follow/implement appropriate guidelines before reopening or expanding operations. Advancement to Phase 3 allows for the following under the “Safe Start” plan:

### Recreation

- Outdoor group rec. sports activities (50 or fewer people)
- Recreational facilities at <50% capacity (gyms, public pools, etc.)

### Gatherings

- Allow gatherings with no more than 50 people

### Travel

- Resume non-essential travel

### Business/Employers

- Restaurants/taverns <75% capacity/table size no larger than 10
- Bar areas in restaurant/taverns at <25% capacity
- Movie theaters at <50% capacity
- Customer-facing government services (telework remains strongly encouraged)
- Libraries
- Museums
- All other business activities not yet listed (under Phase 1 and 2) except for nightclubs and events with greater than 50 people

Businesses listed in Phase 3 or currently open in Phase 2, may reopen/expand operations only when they can implement state guidelines issued for each business sector under Phase 3 guidelines. As in Phase 2, the state is still working through the guidelines for each sector and will post them to their website as soon as they are completed. These guidelines can be accessed at <https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources/covid-19-reopening-guidance-businesses-and-workers>

Advancement to Phase 3 is an important step but it is critical that we realize the crisis is not over. This step forward is part of the recovery and it depends upon all of us, as individuals and within workplaces, to take protective measures so we don't slide backwards.

For each of us individually, these protective measures include:

- Keep physical distance of at least 6 feet whenever possible;
- Washing hands thoroughly and often;
- Wearing an appropriate face covering in public settings;
- Regularly sanitizing high-touch surfaces;
- Staying home when we feel ill and getting a COVID-19 test if we have symptoms suggestive of COVID; and
- Remembering that it is safer at home, especially for those 65+ years of age and those with chronic underlying health issues.

Business/industry sectors listed in the phased approach must ensure that they follow their specific guideline for safe and healthy operations. This includes cloth face coverings use for employees as directed by the guidelines and Washington State Labor and Industries.

**Resources to Assist Businesses Reopening Safely:**

Staff at NETCHD have put together packets with information and resources that businesses may use to ensure they are following the guidelines recommended for reopening. This information is available at [www.netchd.org](http://www.netchd.org). Each business is going to be different in how they implement these guidelines based on their size, facility, and product. NETCHD is available to review safety plans for your businesses. Please contact our Environmental Health Department at 509-684-2262, option #2 if you have questions or concerns regarding the recommended guidelines.

See Northeast Tri County Health District's "[Getting Back to Business-Starter Pack](#)" and other business/employer resources at [www.netchd.org](http://www.netchd.org).

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