



## Washington State Coronavirus Response (COVID-19)

Economic Resiliency Team - Joint Information Center, Camp Murray

The Business and Workers newsletter provides weekly updates to help businesses and workers navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. It is compiled by the Economic Resiliency Team (ERT), part of the Joint Information Center.

### Safe Start Phased Reopening Announced

New reopening approach establishes reopening criteria responsive to local conditions.

The statewide Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, first announced on March 19, ended on Sunday.

Washington's economy is now on a path to recovery. The [Safe Start plan](#) is the state's strategy to adapt to local conditions and optimize economic activity and public health.

The Safe Start plan is based on a county-by-county approach to reopening. Criteria for county phase advancement were described in a [May 29 memo](#) issued by the governor.

The plan allows for some Phase 1 counties to enter a "modified Phase 1" that permits some Phase 2 activities with modifications. Phase 2 counties are eligible to apply for Phase 3 after three weeks have elapsed under Phase 2.

The plan does allow for regression if public health conditions worsen. The counties may initiate a return to an earlier phase, or the Secretary of Health may return a county to an earlier phase if necessary.

Review the [announcement](#) and the [phase criteria](#) for more information.

### New Business Activity Guidance

[Real Estate & Mortgage](#)

[Washington Talking Book and Braille Library](#)

[Agricultural Workers](#)

[Curbside Library Services](#)

[Religious & Faith Organizations](#)

[Drive-In Theaters](#)

[Workforce Training \(Phase 1, Phase 2\)](#)

*[\(See the full list here\)](#)*

### Cloth Facial Coverings Required for Washington Workers

Employees statewide to don cloth facial coverings at the workplace starting June 8.

Beginning June 8, all employees will be required to wear a cloth facial covering, except when working alone in an office, vehicle, or at a job site, or when the job has no in-person interaction.

Employers must provide cloth facial coverings to employees, unless their exposure dictates a higher level of protection under the Department of Labor and Industries' [safety requirements](#). Employees may choose to wear their own facial coverings at work, provided it meets the minimum requirements.

[See the governor's Medium post for more information.](#)

## Safe Start Details New Requirements for All Employers

The Safe Start plan identifies 11 universal workplace safety considerations.

New, universal workplace safety requirements have been instituted under the Safe Start plan as a broad defense against the spread of COVID-19 at Washington workplaces.

The requirements encompass facial coverings, personal protective equipment, physical distancing, hand sanitation, surface sanitation, [employee education](#), development of policy for ill employees, and compliance with emergency workplace guidance issued by the State of Washington.

[See the full Safe Start plan for more information.](#)

## Employment Security Department Offers Return-To-Work Resources

As business activity resumes, ESD is prepared with answers to common questions

The reopen of Washington's economy will "resemble more the turn of a dial than the flip of a switch," according to Governor Inslee. ESD offers several resources as employers gradually return to full-steam.

ESD has developed a Return-To-Work FAQ to address common worker and employer questions. Can workers refuse work and collect unemployment? Are workers that fall ill eligible for unemployment? Answers to these and other questions can be found under [Workers Q&A](#) and [Business Q&A](#).

ESD's [SharedWork](#) provides employers flexibility to bring employees back and retain their workers at reduced hours. The program offers partial unemployment benefits to workers whose hours are reduced by as much as 50 percent. Employees can begin to return to work and earn nearly a full paycheck.

[Watch ESD's SharedWork program overview video.](#)

## New Risk Assessment Dashboard Consolidates Safe Start Progress

Dashboard shows county-level phase status, disease activity, and other critical metrics

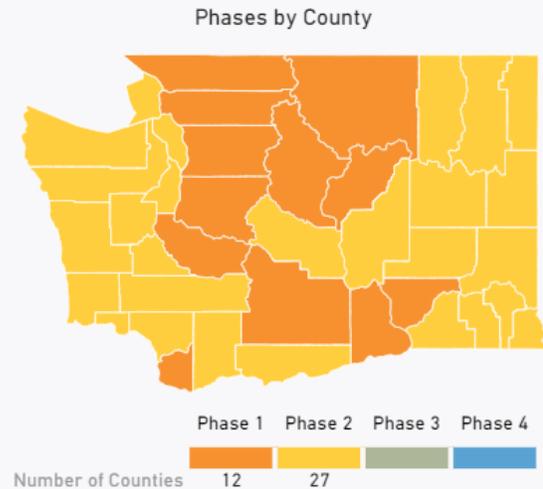
The Safe Start plan will open economic activity based on local public health conditions. The new dashboard on [coronavirus.wa.gov](https://coronavirus.wa.gov) illustrates a county-level picture of local conditions and readiness to reopen.

Key metrics in Phase advancement are disease activity, testing capacity, healthcare system readiness, case investigations, and danger to high-risk populations.

The "Phases and Risk Assessment Tab" shows statewide and county-level Safe Start progress. It also plainly states whether or not the state, or a particular county, is meeting criteria to reopen.

### Washington State key metrics

	Value	Goal	Meeting Goal
Rate per 100K of newly diagnosed cases during the prior two weeks	41.8	<25	No
Number of individuals tested for each new case during the prior week	18.9	>50	No
Percent of individuals testing positive for COVID-19 during the past week	5.3%	<2%	No
Percent of licensed beds occupied by patients	64.5%	<80%	Yes
Percent of licensed beds occupied by COVID-19 cases	3.5%	<10%	Yes



*1 Safe Start progress as of 6/3, 9:15 a.m.*

## Extended Tax Deadline Approaches, IRS Prepares for Common Questions

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website addresses common questions related to economic impact payments, filing deadlines, and recently-passed tax credits.

Circle July 15 on the calendar – it is the extended deadline to file and pay federal taxes.

Some federal economic impact payments (i.e. stimulus checks) are still being dispensed. The [IRS Economic Impact Payment Information Center](#) addresses eligibility requirements and questions related to requesting, calculating, and receiving payments.

[Notice 2020-32](#) allows for some federal income tax deductions for Paycheck Protection Program loan recipients. [Notice 2020-35](#) postpones deadlines for certain time-sensitive actions relating to taxes, exemptions, employee benefit plans, and more.

A [New Employee Retention Credit](#) can be claimed on wages paid between March 12, 2020 and January 1, 2021.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act provides [tax credits](#) to reimburse employers for the expense of paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave to employees unable to work due to COVID-19.

[Sign up for the IRS Monthly Business Newsletter here.](#)

## Additional Resources

Small Business Requirements and Resources Webinar *by the state's Small Business Liaison Team*

- This [regular webinar series](#) offers information specific to small businesses, and a panel of state agency representatives respond to live Q&A.

COVID-19 Business Checklist *by Challenge Seattle*

- Challenge Seattle's [COVID-19 Business Checklist](#) offers a library of ideas and precautionary measures that businesses can deploy to resume activity and protect workers and customers.

Washington-Made PPE Marketplace *by the Association of Washington Business*

- AWB's "[PPE Connect](#)" marketplace connects Washington employers with Washington manufacturers of protective equipment. Keep your workers safe and support Washington businesses by requesting PPE through AWB's marketplace. AWB has also published a [Safe Work Plan template](#) that may be a helpful starting point for your own internal communications.

COVID-19 Webinar Recordings *by the Association of Washington Business*

- On the [May 29 webinar](#), ESD Commissioner Suzi LeVine briefed the audience on recovery of fraudulent unemployment benefits and Office of the Governor External Relations Director Nick Streuli presented on Safe Start progress. A panel of experts from state agencies responded live to audience questions.

"The Impact: Road to Recovery" series *by TVW*

- The [latest episode](#) featured Nick Streuli, External Relations Director for the Office of the Governor. Mr. Streuli discussed the process for writing sector safety guidance, and progress of the Safe Start reopening plan.

### Questions Regarding Your Business?

Ask questions about workplace safety, Safe Start phases, relief programs, paid sick leave, unemployment, and more. Our Business Response Center is standing by to respond.

[Submit your question here.](#)

*"This reopening is vital to our state. We're doing our part to produce guidance and improve awareness so that we may resume life and work in a safe way."*

**Elizabeth Smith, Deputy Director of the Department of Labor and Industries**