



News Release

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For more information contact:

Erik Martin, 360-740-2697

Lewis County Commissioners recommend COVID-19 safety measures

Chehalis, WA – The Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved a number of safety-related recommendations to Lewis County residents at its meeting on Friday, March 13, 2020. Although there have been no confirmed cases in Lewis County, the primary message commissioners want to convey to everyone is to keep calm while still taking this disease seriously.

According to medical experts at the state and federal level, the best defense against COVID-19 is for people to practice what is known as social distancing. The coronavirus cannot move on its own. People spread it from one person to the next, to the next, to the next, and so on. Therefore, if everyone practices social distancing – reducing the amount of contact each of us have with other people – we can help reduce the spread. This is the rationale behind closures and cancelations of large events.

Lewis County leadership recommends that all county residents and visitors follow these guidelines until the COVID-19 danger has passed:

1. Limit attendance at meetings, services, recreational activities, and social events unless absolutely necessary. Cancel, reschedule, or find a remote-access means of having events where possible.
2. Individuals older than 60 or those who have underlying medical conditions are encouraged to not attend group gatherings.
3. If you are sick, stay home and isolate yourself from others in your home – including pets. Guidelines for knowing when to seek medical care are available online at covid19.lewiscountywa.gov
4. Avoid others who are sick.
5. Clean high-touch surfaces often.

Following these guidelines can help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Lewis County and reduce the number of residents who get sick. Minimizing the number of sick people will reduce pressure on county healthcare resources, keeping them available for those who are most in need.

In addition, county leaders urge:

1. Everyone to be prepared to stay at home for up to two weeks, either with supplies on hand, or arrangements with others to provide needed items;
2. Employers to consider work-from-home options and/or split shifts for their employees;

3. Businesses to develop continuity of operations plans;
4. Schools to finalize plans that accommodate student meals and shelter for children with no other options in response to the statewide school closure;
5. Churches to make alternate arrangements for services, such as online remote access or conducting multiple services that accommodate fewer people at each; and
6. Sporting events to be postponed or cancelled.

County leaders believe it is unrealistic to expect Lewis County will not have cases of COVID-19. Their goal is to minimize the disease's impact by preventing its spread as much as possible. Communities in other countries that have embraced these social distancing measures have shown dramatic reductions in disease spread as reflected in the number of people who got sick.

More than 22% of Lewis County residents are age 60 or older. They are parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and loved ones. They are also most at risk from COVID-19.

Thanks to modern medicine, there are also more people than ever of all ages living with underlying medical conditions who may look perfectly healthy. They are at just as much risk from COVID-19 as the elderly.

County leaders understand these actions will have an impact on all members of our community, from a small inconvenience to possibly a large economic problem, but the health of our county is the most important thing right now.

Everyone has an important role to play in stopping the spread of this disease. Practice good hygiene, stay home if you do not feel well, and avoid community events if possible. We all have a lot at stake. We all have people in our lives who are at high risk of getting very ill or passing before their time. We have it in our power to help decrease that risk.

Lewis County COVID-19 Web Page
covid19.lewiscountywa.gov

Washington State Department of Health (DOH)
www.doh.wa.gov/coronavirus

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