



Business & Worker Update: June 10, 2020

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Washington State Coronavirus Response (COVID-19)

Economic Resiliency Team - Joint Information Center, Camp Murray

JUNE 10, 2020

The Business and Workers update is a weekly newsletter providing news and information to help businesses and workers navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. The information is compiled by the state Economic Resiliency Team (ERT), part of the Joint Information Center.

Cloth Facial Coverings Required in Workplaces Statewide

Effective June 8, cloth facial coverings at minimum required at the workplace.

Starting this Monday, workers statewide donned cloth facial coverings as they walked into work. As economic activity continues to accelerate, face coverings will be a critical measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at workplaces.

The requirement allows for a few exceptions. Those working alone in an office, vehicle, or jobsite are not required to wear a face covering. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who communicate with someone who relies on nonverbal language cues, are likewise exempt.

A worker with a medical condition or disability may also be exempt from the requirement. The employee must provide their employer with a medical

professional's accommodation statement that facial coverings or masks should not be worn due to their condition.

Employers are required to provide workers with the appropriate type of face covering, mask, or respirator depending on the [level of risk for their specific type of work](#). Employees can also bring their own face covering if their work is in the low risk category. To clarify the requirements, the Department of Labor & Industries has published a manual for the proper selection and use of face coverings and respirators: "[Which Mask for Which Task](#)". The department also released an [FAQ Page](#) to respond to common questions about the mask requirement.

Frequently Asked Question

What does it mean to be "working alone"?

One of the exceptions to required facial coverings at the workplace is working alone. Someone is considered to be working alone when they are isolated from interaction with other people and have little to no expectation of in-person interruption. How often a worker is able to work alone may vary throughout the day.

Examples of working alone include:

- A lone worker inside the enclosed cab of a crane or other heavy equipment, vehicle or harvester.
- A person by themselves inside an office with four walls and a door.
- A lone worker inside of a cubicle with 4 walls (one with an opening for an entryway) that are high enough to block the breathing zone of anyone walking by, and whose work activity will not require anyone to come inside of the cubicle.
- A worker by themselves outside in an agricultural field, the woods or other open area with no anticipated contact with others.

See other [FAQ about the facial covering rule here](#).

New Phase 3 Business Safety Plan Template Released

New template helps businesses to develop and post safety plans that comply with state and sector requirements.

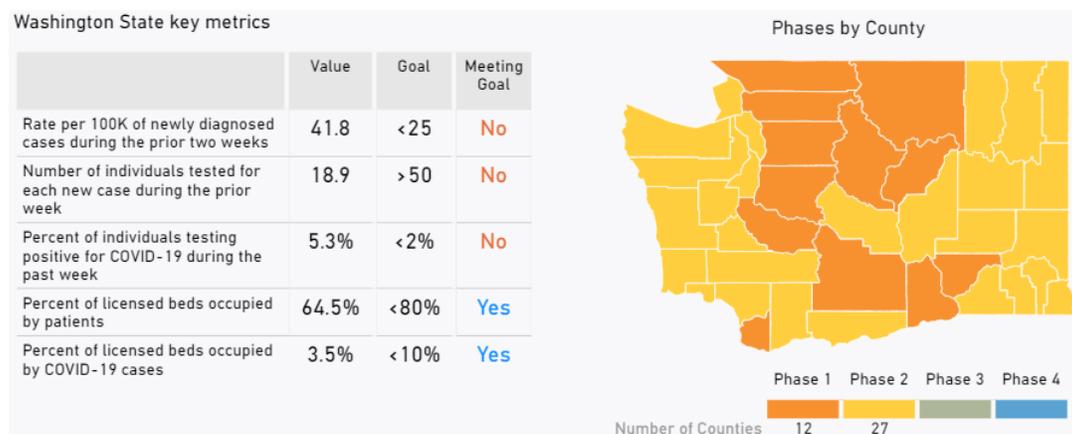
No two workplaces are exactly alike. The Safe Start reopening plan was written to be responsive to unique working conditions. While the plan identifies a number of universal workplace safety measures, the intent is for businesses to adapt these measures to suit their operations.

The new [Phase 3 Safety Plan template](#) helps businesses implement and document legally-required workplace safety measures. The template serves as a checklist to cover all critical workplace safety requirements, and can also serve as reference for inquiring customers and employees. Workers, clients, and customers will want to know that every business is doing all possible to operate safely. Posting this template may instill customer confidence while satisfying legal requirements.

Every business operating in Phase 3 must author an outline of measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is not required that the plan be submitted to a state agency or local health jurisdiction for approval. The plan must be available on the premises and must be made available to Washington State regulatory, health, or safety authorities in the event of an inspection.

[See the Safe Start Phase 3 Safety Plan Template here.](#)

Safe Start Phase Progress



Safe Start county phase status as of 6/3, 9:15 a.m.

Paycheck Protection Program Expands Flexibility

The Small Business Administration is offering forgivable loans to small businesses to keep employees on payroll.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) offers loans to small businesses to help weather the pandemic. If the business is able to maintain its workforce while dedicating borrowed funds to payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities, SBA will forgive the loan.

The PPP was amended on June 5 by the [Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020](#) to expand some of the program's provisions. The window to spend borrowed funds was extended from eight weeks to 24 weeks, and the repayment window for non-forgiven portion of loans was extended from two years to five years. The amendment reduces mandatory payroll spend of borrowed funds from 75% to 60%. Further, the amendment allows for forgiveness of loans even in some cases where the business is unable to restore its entire workforce.

There are over \$100 billion available funds in the program's budget, so businesses are still encouraged to apply. The PPP has injected \$12 billion into Washington State's economy so far and may be a valuable boost to small businesses striving to preserve their workforces through the downturn.

[Visit the Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program site here.](#)

New or Updated Business Activity Guidance

[Fitness & Training](#)

[Pro Sports, Sporting Activities](#)

[Domestic Services](#)

[Mini Golf, Water Recreation](#)

[Golf](#)

[Outdoor Recreation](#)

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

High-Risk Worker Proclamation Extended

Proclamation asserts right of high-risk workers to protect themselves from COVID-19 without jeopardizing employment.

On June 9, Governor Inslee announced [Proclamation 20-46.1](#), extending the provisions of the [Proclamation 20-46](#). 20-46 established protections for workers identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be at a [high risk of complications](#) from COVID-19.

For high-risk workers, employers are to explore alternative work assignments such as telework or reassignment. Employers must permit the use of accrued leave or unemployment insurance where alternative assignment is not feasible. If leave or paid time off is exhausted, employers must maintain health-related benefits until the employee is eligible to return to work. Finally, employers may not take adverse employment action for exercising their rights under this proclamation.

The extension preserves the provisions of 20-46 through August 1, 2020, unless extended further.

Review Proclamations [20-46.1](#) (extension) and [20-46](#) (original) for more specific details.

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.](#)

Working Washington Fund Preserving Small-Business Jobs across Washington

Local Associate Economic Development Organizations (ADOs) to announce recipients.

The [Working Washington Fund](#) is one of many relief programs in action to provide support to Washington businesses as they begin to reopen. The program is designed to support very small businesses with 10 or fewer employees by chipping in to pay for rent, utilities, supplies, and other operating costs.

On June 4, the Department of Commerce [announced](#) that 71 businesses in Chelan and Douglas counties received a total of \$333k in Working Washington Funds. Commerce also [announced](#) that 61 small businesses in Spokane received \$583k in funds, preserving 246 jobs. Local ADO partners are notifying recipients statewide, with 38 of 39 counties approved.

Small businesses are among the hardest hit by the pandemic. Programs like the Working Washington Fund may be small supports in the grand scheme of things, but they are big boosts to the small businesses that receive them and keep the lights on and valuable employees on the payroll.

Employment Security Department Offers Return-To-Work Resources

As the dial of economic activity turns forward, ESD offers timely programs to businesses resuming operations.

More than 800,000 Washingtonians have filed unemployment claims in 2020; the effects of the pandemic have been devastating. Recent weeks have seen a long-awaited turnaround. All but six Washington counties have

advanced from Safe Start Phase 1 and are beginning to reopen their economies

In the weeks to come, businesses will bring back laid-off employees or perhaps look for new talent. [WorkSourceWA.com](https://www.worksourcewa.com) is helping to connect workers with prospective employers as the economy picks up steam. Employers can post unlimited job postings, automatically rank applicants, and compare candidates side-by-side. Job seekers can use advanced search tools to browse thousands of openings.

For employers gradually reactivating their workforce, [SharedWork](#) provides employers flexibility to bring employees back and retain 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.](#)

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. The next webinar will be held on [June 18 at 9 a.m.](#)

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

On the [June 5 webinar](#), Representatives of the Department of Labor & Industries discussed protective equipment requirements and the inspection and enforcement processes for workplace safety. 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.

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.

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.](#)

“The challenges we face right now are enormous and daunting, but I am encouraged to see so many individuals and employers speaking out about the need to address issues of inequality and injustice.”

Kris Johnson, President of the Association of Washington Business