

NE Oregon Joint Information Center

Union and Wallowa Counties



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For Immediate Release

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La Grande, Oregon – The Union County Incident Management Team hosted a community briefing yesterday. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for leadership to answer key questions that have been surfacing locally regarding COVID-19. The briefing is available for viewing on the NE Oregon Joint Information Center Facebook page and at <http://neojic.union-county.org/2020/07/01/union-county-community-update/>.

One of the questions from the briefing addressed to La Grande Police Chief Gary Bell was **How do you enforce the Governor’s mandatory face covering order in the City of La Grande?** Chief Bell explained that the mandate requires a face covering in all indoor spaces open to the public. Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) expects businesses to follow this guideline by requiring people to wear face coverings inside their business. There are exceptions to the face covering rule for persons under 12 years of age and for persons with underlying health conditions or a disability that would make it unsafe for them to wear a mask. If someone does not have a mask a business may ask the patron to wear one. If the patron states that they have an underlying health condition or disability as the reason why they’re not wearing a mask, no more questions should be asked. If the person simply does not want to wear a mask, the business may ask the person to leave. Please do not engage in any confrontations or altercations over this. Businesses may be sanctioned by Oregon OSHA for not following these guidelines. Local law enforcement will not be arresting people or issuing criminal citations for failure to wear a mask.

Citizens are asked to NOT contact the police department or 911 to report violations related to people not wearing face coverings. Locally, resources and capacity are not available to handle the number of calls this could generate. The appropriate organization to contact if you have concerns about this guideline not being followed is OSHA. They can be reached at 800-922-2689, or online at <https://osha.oregon.gov/workers/Pages/index.aspx>.

If you see others that are not wearing a face covering, remove yourself from the situation if you feel unsafe. Please be kind, and remember that some individuals can not wear a face covering due to health conditions or other factors.

Frequently asked Questions – Mask and Face Covering Guidance for Business, Transit, and the Public:

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2390e.pdf>

Statewide Mask, Face Shield, Face Covering Guidance:

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2288K.pdf>

Today, five new COVID-19 cases were announced for Union County bringing the total to 342. Of this total, 20 have recovered. Union County has had a total of 1,674 negative tests processed. Wallowa County has a total of 10 positive cases, one listed as recovered, and 431 negative tests processed.

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