



# COVID-19 UPDATE

April 6, 2020

Okanogan County Public Health is reporting 3 new cases. This brings the total confirmed case count in Okanogan County to 9. Cases are from the following parts of the County:

4	Colville Indian Reservation
4	Methow Valley
1	South County

## Recommendations on Cloth Face Coverings

All of us involved in the COVID-19 response know that protecting our health workers and first responders is vital for each and every one of us. That is why our limited supplies of commercial Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) have been reserved for them.

Okanogan County Public Health, Washington State Department of Health, and the CDC now recommend wearing cloth face coverings in public places where you cannot reliably stay six feet away from other people. This might include weekly trips to the grocery store, or a necessary trip to the doctor's office or pharmacy. Or it could be more frequent, if you are an essential worker, and your job unavoidably brings you within six feet of people.

The scientific evidence on masking by the general public is not so clear. One downside of public masking is the idea that masks might make us feel too safe, and reduce our attention to handwashing, surface cleaning, social distancing, and other critical measures. We think cloth face coverings may reduce some additional spread, but, still, the best way to prevent spread of COVID-19 is washing your hands thoroughly and frequently, not touching your face, and staying at home as much as possible. Face coverings will not work without clean hands and good social distance. And don't put a cloth face covering on a child under age two.

Until supplies of commercially made masks are available, members of the public who want masks should be using homemade ones. Masks with three layers of cotton material will work. They can have elastic ear loops or ties that go around the back of the head.

If you aren't able to sew a mask, you can use something such as a cotton scarf or bandana folded into three layers that will cover your nose and mouth and tied behind your head.

The Governor is asking Washington State manufacturing businesses to help in this effort, and the prospects are good that thousands of masks can be made available quickly. In the meantime, you will need to make or adapt your own face covering.

But here's a caution. Once you have worn one for a while – certainly after a day's use – be careful when removing it not to touch its outside surface. That's where the virus will be. Wash those used masks in hot water and dry them on high heat – that

### Confirmed Cases in Okanogan County

(As of April 6 at 12 PM)

9

### Samples Sent for Testing

246

### Negative Test Results

195

### Test Results Pending

42

### DOH Call Center 1-800-525-0127

Press # after the prompt

### Education & Information

[www.doh.wa.gov/  
emergencies/coronavirus](http://www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus)

### Okanogan County Alerts

Sign up for alerts like  
these from Emergency  
Management at:

<https://www.okanogandem.org>

will kill the virus. And if you have a collection of used masks, treat them as contaminated by carefully dropping them into a sealable plastic bag until you can carefully dump them into a washing machine. Then throw the bag in a garbage can. In health care, we know that taking off PPE carelessly is as risky as wearing it incorrectly, so use special care when you have finished with the mask.

Sewing patterns for masks can be found online at these locations:

- <https://www.confluencehealth.org/covid19-donations/> (See video link at right of page.)
- <https://www.joann.com/make-to-give-response/>
- <http://www.fabricpatch.net/face-masks-for-covid-19-relief.htm>
- [https://media.rainpos.com/220/quick\\_hospital\\_gown\\_1.pdf](https://media.rainpos.com/220/quick_hospital_gown_1.pdf)

Information on making and donating masks is shared frequently on the Okanogan County COVID-19 Crafters and Sewers Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/501278967214839/>).