

Public Health Update: **Red Alert Level 3** Guidance

Allen County at Risk Level 3 (Red) for COVID-19 as of July 30, 2020

Recent public health data has led the Ohio Department of Health to designate Allen County as being in a Red Alert Level 3 as defined by the Ohio Public Health Advisory System. A facial covering order is in place.

The information contained in this Public Health Update describes the alert and the safety measures everyone needs to take to slow the spread of COVID-19. This update also explains what Allen County residents need to know to comply with current orders of the Director of the Ohio Department of Health. At this time, there are no new mandated closures or cancellations – businesses, organizations and individuals are provided information here so they can determine how they can best protect themselves, their fellow residents, and their community. If all safety guidelines cannot be maintained, please reconsider your activity. If people do more than the minimum to act safely, it will benefit everyone.

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Risk Level 3 means

We are experiencing very high exposure and spread of COVID-19

- People should take appropriate steps to protect their health and limit their activities
- People should follow all current health orders

Allen County is experiencing widespread community transmission. Many of our new cases are coming from people attending social gatherings. We are also noting recent increases in the number of cases in people in their 20s and 30s and people under age 19.

Facial Coverings Order - A face covering is any material covering an individuals' nose, mouth, and chin.

Governor DeWine has issued a mask mandate for the entire state of Ohio. Residents are required to wear a face covering, in accordance with the [July 23, 2020 Public Health Order](#).

- In any indoor location that is not a residence;
- When outdoors and unable to consistently maintain a distance of six feet or more from individuals who are not members of their household; or
- While waiting for, riding, driving, or operating public transportation, a taxi, a private car service, or a ride-sharing vehicle. This does not apply to private or rental vehicles where members of a family are sharing a vehicle. This does not apply to vehicles engaged in direct travel through a county that does not stop in that county.

The order does not apply to children under the age of 10 or any other minor who cannot safely wear a face covering. Other exceptions are listed in the [order](#).

Wearing a face covering when you're in public will slow the spread of the coronavirus, allowing businesses to stay open.

The order also maintains the face covering guidance in place for employees and businesses. Employees are required to wear facial coverings with limited exceptions, such as if wearing a mask is prohibited by federal regulation, if communicating with the hearing impaired, when not advisable for health or safety reasons, when alone in an office or personal workspace, and other similar measures. See [individual orders](#) for more details. **A [sample sign to post to remind people to wear a face covering](#) is available on our website.**

Steps We Should Take to Slow the Spread of COVID-19

It is critical to take action now so Allen County can get our risk level down to yellow.

[Ohio's color-coded alerting system](#) is built on a data-driven framework to assess the degree of the virus' spread and to inform, engage, and empower individuals, businesses, communities, local governments, and others in our response and every day actions. Everyone needs to do their part and follow all the preventive actions they can to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Our actions today determine how many people will be affected in the coming weeks. We can reduce our risk. Together we can fight the virus and keep our economy moving.

Everyone:

- Comply with all health orders (see below)
- Protect others and yourself: Assess your health every day and stay home if sick
- Maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from non-household members
- Wear a face covering in public
- Follow good hygiene practices: Wash hands, use hand sanitizer, cover coughs and sneezes, avoid touching your face
- Limit attending gatherings to small gatherings only
- Decrease in-person interactions with others when possible, especially with anyone considered high risk
- Avoid traveling to high risk areas; and if you are high risk, consider necessary travel only
- **High risk individuals/People who live with high risk individuals:** Limit attending gatherings of any number/size

Social/Recreational Activities:

- Consider: Does it make sense to do this activity now when we are trying to reduce in-person interactions?
- Increase virtual interactions rather than in-person gatherings, e.g. church services, club meetings

Businesses:

- Ensure a minimum of 6 feet between people, if not possible, install barriers
- Promote measures to maximize social distancing, e.g. drive thru, pick-up and delivery services, outdoor dining
- Promote phone/on-line transactions
- Allow employees to work from home as able
- Use virtual methods for meetings or cancel/postpone in-person meetings when unable to social distance
- Post signage on health and safety guidelines in common areas

Retail/Services/Entertainment:

- Stagger entry of customers and guests
- Have customers wear face coverings upon entry
- Increase availability for curbside pick-up, if possible
- Establish maximum capacity
- Space customer lines with floor markers, use alternate registers
- Post social distancing signs/reminders
- Disinfect high-contact surfaces hourly
- Make regular announcements to remind customers to follow social distancing and personal hygiene measures
- Designate one-way aisles

Ohio Still Under Several State-wide Orders

It is important to remember that ALL 88 counties are still under the following Public Health Orders, regardless of Alert Level. These orders will remain in place until the earlier of the State of Emergency declared by the Governor no longer exists, or the Director of the Ohio Department of Health rescinds them.

- Gatherings - All public and private gatherings of greater than 10 people occurring outside a single household and connected property, or living unit and connected property, are prohibited, except for the limited purposes permitted by Orders of the Director of Health, such as County/Independent Fairs, and for businesses/activities that adhere to safety measures outlined in the sector-specific guidelines that are available at coronavirus.ohio.gov.
- Sector-specific guidelines are still in place for Businesses, Restaurants & Bars, Campgrounds, Non-contact Sports, and Gym/Dance Studios & Rec Centers.
- Businesses must require all employees to wear facial coverings, with limited exceptions. Customers must follow the current facial coverings orders. Businesses should encourage customers to wear facial coverings and have the discretion to require them when Allen County's Public Health Risk Alerting Level returns to Level 2 or Level 1.
- Social Distancing Requirements are still in place: maintain at least 6 feet between individuals not in the same household, wash/sanitize hands frequently, disinfect common touch surfaces, cover coughs and sneezes with a sleeve or elbow, and avoid shaking hands.

Plan to Reduce Your Risk

Please keep the following overarching guidance in mind when planning any activity and incorporate as many of the low risk principles as possible.

Lowest Risk		Highest Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outdoor activities• Space for people to spread out, 6 feet or more apart from each other• Use of face coverings• Fewer people• Limited time in close contact to others• Handwashing facilities and/or sanitizing products readily available• Frequently touched surfaces cleaned and disinfected often• Individually wrapped or served food		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indoor activities• Confined spaces• Crowded conditions, people close together• No or limited use of face coverings• More people• People spending long periods of time near each other• Limited handwashing/sanitizing products• Limited cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces• Equipment/supplies used by multiple people• Buffet/self-serve food

Using a cloth face covering (mask)

- Adjust the face covering to cover your nose, mouth and chin and be sure it fits snugly
- Secure the strings behind your head or over your ears
- Avoid touching your mask while you are wearing it
- Clean your hands before and after touching the mask
- Remove and store mask before eating or drinking. Fold mask on itself, touching only the outside of the mask, so that the insides are facing each other.
- Avoid hanging the mask on one ear, around your neck or pushed onto your forehead.



Ohio COVID-19 Risk Level Guidelines for the Public

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Public Emergency Active exposure and spread. Follow all current health orders.	Public Emergency Increased exposure and spread. Exercise high degree of caution. Follow all current health orders.	Public Emergency Very high exposure and spread. Limit activities as much as possible. Follow all current health orders.	Public Emergency Severe exposure and spread. Only leave home for supplies and services. Follow all current health orders.

LEVEL 1–4 REQUIRE COMPLIANCE WITH ALL HEALTH ORDERS

Over 60% of Ohioans are considered high-risk based on [CDC guidance](#). High-risk individuals* are at an increased risk of severe illness and should take every precaution to guard against contracting COVID-19, including following higher risk level guidance outlined below. Consult a doctor about your risk.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a daily health/symptom self-evaluation and stay at home if symptomatic.** Maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from non-household members. Wear face coverings in public, especially when social distancing is difficult to maintain. Increase caution when interacting with others not practicing social distancing or wearing face covers. Avoid traveling to high-risk areas. Follow good hygiene standards, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer frequently. Avoid touching your face. Cover coughs or sneezes (e.g., into a tissue, or elbow). Symptom self-evaluation monitoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same guidelines as in Level 1. Avoid contact with anyone who is considered high-risk. High-risk individuals* should take extra care to follow precautions. Decrease in-person interactions outside household. Seek medical care as needed, but limit or avoid unnecessary visits to hospitals, nursing homes, and residential care facilities to see others as much as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same guidelines as in Levels 1-2. Decrease in-person interactions with others. Consider necessary travel only. Limit attending gatherings of any number. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same guidelines as in Level 1-3. Stay at home/ necessary travel only.

The Ohio Public Health Advisory System will be updated every Thursday by the Ohio Department of Health and Governor DeWine's office. The level a county is placed in is determined by how many risk indicators that county triggers based on that county's coronavirus case data:

- Yellow – 0-1 Risk indicators
- Orange – 2-3 Risk indicators
- Red – 4-5 Risk indicators
- Purple – 6-7 Risk indicators

A county's alert level is determined by seven data indicators:

- New Cases Per Capita
- Sustained Increase in New Cases
- Proportion of Cases that Are Not Congregate Cases
- Sustained Increase in Emergency Room Visits
- Sustained Increase in Outpatient Visits
- Sustained Increase in New COVID-19 Hospital Admissions
- Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Bed Occupancy