

## Douglas County Returns to “Extreme” Risk Level on February 26

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases, Douglas County will be downgraded to “extreme” risk level effective Friday, February 26. Douglas County will remain at this level through, at least, March 11. Since we have been at the “high” risk level for a number of weeks, following are links to the modified guidance for counties deemed to be at the extreme risk level. In general, any/all indoor spaces, except restaurants, are allowed to have up to six people in a space of more than 500 square feet, under the modified guidelines. If owners/operators have more than 1000 square feet and can effectively divide the space internally, there can be as many as four distinct areas, each having up to six customers at a time.

For specifics:

- Indoor Recreation & Fitness Establishments: [Guidance FAQs](#)
- Indoor Entertainment Establishments: [Guidance FAQs](#)
- Outdoor Entertainment Establishments: [Guidance FAQs](#)
- Eating and Drinking Establishments; [Guidance FAQs](#) (Dining pod signage: <https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le3571.pdf> )

Each risk level has different safety mandates, check out the [assigned health and safety measure mandates](#). For more [information about the risk levels and activity guidance, guidance based on county risk levels](#).

## “Calls to Action” in the Oregon State Legislature

**Call to Action #1: SUPPORT HB 3177 / The COVID Business Equity Act**—If passed, would prevent the Governor from shutting down restaurants and gyms in any further emergency declaration. [CLICK HERE TO READ THE BILL](#)

HB 3177 has a hearing before the House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity on Thursday, February 25. Written testimony from the public in support of this bill is immensely important. So many of these small businesses, and the citizens they employ, have been adversely impacted in our community and across the state. Please take a few minutes to show your support of our small local businesses, by submitting written testimony in support of HB 3177.

A reminder of how we submit public testimony during COVID:

- [CLICK HERE](#) for the link that will take you to the House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity.
- Scroll to the bottom of the webpage and click on the link that says, "Click to Submit Testimony" or [Click Here](#) to go directly to that page.
- Once there, click on the circle next to HB 3177 under “**Choose the bill for your testimony.**”
- Then proceed to fill out the necessary information, whether you **SUPPORT** or oppose the bill. You will then have the opportunity to either upload a PDF or click the TEXT bubble to draft your testimony or cut and paste it in the space provided.
- After you are finished with your testimony, make sure you hit the “SUBMIT TESTIMONY” button at the bottom of the page.

**Call to Action #2: OPPOSE HB 2205**—Establishes a procedure for any person to bring action in the name of the state to recover civil penalties for violation of state law. [CLICK HERE TO READ THE BILL](#)

HB 2205 has a hearing before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil Law on Wednesday, February 24. This bill creates a mechanism that allows for private lawsuits on behalf of the State for the potential violation of ANY Oregon statute. This is a citizen suit provision on steroids, hiding under the guise of assisting state agencies with enforcing their rules and laws or providing justice to workers. If history tells us anything, neither of those outcomes is likely to occur, although local businesses will suffer greatly.

**The endless lawsuits proposed in HB 2205 threaten every employer in Oregon.** Only one state has adopted similar policy, and California’s Private Attorney General Act (PAGA) has devastated the state’s business community. Each year in California, businesses face approximately 4,000 PAGA lawsuits, forcing employers into costly settlements, and many for minor or innocent mistakes. Note

that California's PAGA law only applies to labor policy and is still incredibly damaging. HB 2205 applies to every law on the books in Oregon.

**This extreme proposal couldn't come at a worse time for Oregon businesses.** Oregon employers have been tasked with implementing and enforcing Oregon's long list of continuously changing COVID-19 mandates and guidelines. They must consistently monitor evolving guidance and rules at the local, state, and federal levels and implement those changes on the ground. Unfortunately, in this rapidly changing regulatory landscape, minor mistakes do occur. However, HB 2205 offers employers no grace and allows anyone to sue for an alleged violation on behalf of the State of Oregon.

**Ask your legislators and the Subcommittee on Civil Law to OPPOSE HB 2205 and any PAGA-related bills.** A reminder of how we submit public testimony during COVID:

- Provide your letter of testimony on your Chamber letterhead. [You can download the template letter here.](#) Please provide specific, local examples where possible. **You will want to create a PDF of your letter to upload.**
- Submit your letter through the [Testimony Portal on the Oregon Legislative Information System \(OLIS\)](#). **You will find this link at the bottom of the committee page on the "Click to Submit Testimony" link.**
- When submitting testimony, you need to:
  - Select the committee hearing the bill: *House Committee on Judiciary House Subcommittee on Civil Law*
  - Select the hearing date: February 24, 2021 at 3:15 PM
  - Select the bill you are submitting testimony on: HB 2205
  - [You can also register to testify remotely.](#) Please view the ["How to Testify" guide](#) for instructions about how to sign up. You must register in order to testify virtually, "in-person."

## [Tools to Access "What's Happening" in the 2021 Oregon Legislature](#)

It is so important that our members submit written or provide verbal testimony on bills that are important to them and our local businesses. As the chamber previously shared, legislative committee days started in mid-January, the legislative session is now currently in process. Check out the [2021 legislative calendar](#). Following are some of the key dates that will govern this year's 160-day session:

- Tuesday, Feb 23: Bill introduction deadline
- Friday, March 19: Original committee "work session" posting deadline
- Tuesday, April 13: Original committee "work session" deadline
- Friday, May 14: Second chamber "work session" posting deadline
- Friday, May 28: Second chamber "work session" deadline
- Friday, June 18: Leadership's targeted date for Sine Die
- Sunday, June 27: Constitutional Sine Die

Here's what we know so far about how the session will be conducted. The session will be virtual through at least early March. The first reassessment will be made on March 1. The only way the Capitol will be reopened is when Marion County enters the lowest of the COVID risk categories. Currently, Marion County is in the highest ("extreme") risk category.

Right now there appears to be more standing committees meeting a little less frequently than usual. There will be more advance notice for hearings and work sessions. Although there are no bill limits this session (more than 3,000 bills have been introduced so far), there will be more prioritization and likely fewer bills being considered. There are indications that budgets won't be addressed until later in the session due to uncertainty around revenue and potential federal aid packages.

**It is so important that our members testify** on bills that are important to them and our local businesses. The Oregon Legislative Assembly has established a process to accept remote verbal public testimony on bills by video or phone during this time, in addition to written public testimony.

Detailed information about how to testify in the 2021 Oregon Legislative Session is outlined in a ["How to Testify" during Oregon's 2021 Legislation Session](#) PDF document.

Here are some additional links to help you stay connected during this legislative session.

- [Oregon Legislative Information System \(OLIS\)](#)
- [Receive Bill Alerts](#)
- [Watch Committee Hearings](#)
- [Find Your Legislator](#)
- [House Committees](#)
- [Senate Committees](#)

You chamber's primary objective is to represent the interests of and advocate for our local business community. The chamber has its legislative and public affairs agenda and positions in place. We're seeing a lot of bad-for-business bills (particularly looking for more revenue in the form of taxes and fees). The chamber will continue to monitor legislative activities daily throughout the session and, act on behalf of our businesses whenever pertinent. The chamber will continue to join with the Oregon State Chamber of Commerce, other chambers and business organizations around the state to make sure the voice of business is heard. Look for "Calls to Action" during the 2021 session and don't hesitate to contact the chamber if you become aware of proposed legislation potentially adverse to business or if you have any questions about the session or chamber positions.

## **Free PPE Still Available to Roseburg Area Businesses**

The Roseburg Area Chamber through a partnership with the City of Roseburg continues to provide free PPE to Roseburg businesses. The PPE available includes: 3-ply ear-loop disposal masks, washable reusable cloth masks, non-surgical KN95 masks, pump-bottle hand sanitizer, antibacterial wipes and disposable nitrile gloves.

To receive the no-cost PPE, businesses should apply through the chamber's website. To apply, visit [COVID-19 Business Recovery Resource Center Library](#) or click [HERE!](#)

## **Still Time to Apply for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)**

Some temporary, but major changes were just announced to the Payroll Protection Program (PPP), aimed at extending aid to minority-owned businesses and to the nation's smallest firms. Only businesses with fewer than 20 employees will be able to apply for PPP funds through March 10. The administration is also making other changes that could impact small business' access to pandemic relief.

Businesses interested in a PPP loan (first or second), ***particularly those unable to access PPP with a traditional bank or credit union***, are encouraged to get in touch as soon as possible. One such participating CDFI is [MoFi.org](#). You can contact your local SBA office for more information on community financial institutions offering access to PPP [HERE](#).

If you received an initial PPP loan from a bank or credit union during the first round, please contact them regarding a second loan.

Updated PPP information and guidance can be found [HERE](#). Borrowers can apply for the Paycheck Protection Program by downloading the [First Draw PPP loan application](#) or [Second Draw PPP loan application](#) and working with a participating PPP lender through the [SBA Lender Match tool](#).

The U.S. Chamber created a new [Guide to Small Business COVID-19 Emergency Loans](#) to provide local chambers and our members with the latest information and answers to FAQs about the changes that have been made to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) Program as part of the end-of-year pandemic relief package Congress passed and which is tentatively slated to become law.

[Click here](#) to view the U.S. Chamber's new Guide to Small Business COVID-19 Emergency Loans. As the year-end federal pandemic relief package evolves and, we are confident, ultimately authorized and signed into law, we will continue to provide updates as the information becomes available.

## **Business Recovery Resource Center Library**

Please continue to check the chamber's online **"Business Recovery Resource Center Library Re: COVID-19 Pandemic,"** as the chamber updates its resource information at least weekly. And, please share this link with friends and colleagues. The more our local businesses are armed with information and access to resources, the stronger our recovery.

## Chamber News, Programs & Updates

The Roseburg Area Chamber's 2021 "Shop Chamber & Save" exclusive member-to-member discount program flyer is [online](#).

The chamber's annual celebration of business and awards event tentatively planned for March 18 is postponed. As soon as we have a new date, we'll be sure and send out a "SAVE THE DATE!"

Missed a past issue of *Business Perspectives* or one of those "oh-so-informative" membership email blasts? No worries. They are posted on the chamber website on the [Monthly Newsletter page](#) . . . just scroll.

*Debbie*

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