



Yakima Health District

Media Release

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COVID-19 Outbreak in the Yakima County Jail

Yakima, WA- On February 10, 2021 the Yakima Health District was notified of several staff and inmates who tested positive at the Yakima County Jail. An investigation was conducted to identify all close contacts to the individuals, including inmates and staff. Additionally, further testing was conducted.

The Yakima Health District conducted a site visit last week and continues to be in communication with the Yakima County Jail. As of March 5th, there have been 14 confirmed COVID-19 cases from staff and 59 confirmed COVID-19 cases from inmates due to this outbreak.

The Yakima Health District has recommended that the Yakima County Jail implement the following:

- Co-hort individuals who have had a positive COVID-19 test
- Co-hort individuals who have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19
- Test inmates every three days
- Continuously monitor staff and inmates for symptoms of COVID-19
- Increase N95 mask usage for staff
- Increase testing for staff

Additionally, the Yakima Health District recommended that the Yakima County Jail continue to implement infection prevention measures such as developing plans for grouping symptomatic inmates together, enforcing visitor limitations and communicating proactive sick leave policies for staff.

COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility

Yakima County continues to be in Phase 1B Tier 1 of COVID-19 vaccination distribution. For those jail staff and inmates who do not already qualify to receive vaccination, the jail staff will be eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in the next tier, Phase 1B Tier 2 and inmates will qualify to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1B Tier 4. Washington State Department of Health estimates Washington State will reach Phase 1B Tier 2 on March 22nd and Phase 1B Tier 4 on April 26th. These dates are tentative and are subject to change based on COVID-19 vaccine supply and demand.



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Quotes

“COVID-19 can spread quickly in congregate settings like the Yakima County Jail. This outbreak serves as a reminder to continue following public health recommendations to slow the spread of COVID-19. By doing our part in preventing transmission within the community, it will decrease the chances of COVID-19 being introduced into congregate living facilities.” -Dr. Jecha, Interim Health Officer, Yakima Health District

“Yakima County Department of Corrections (YCDOC) continues to work closely with Yakima Health District to prevent further spread of COVID-19. The Department continues to follow all CDC and State Department of Health guidelines for best practices. In addition, YCDOC is in the process of adding Electromagnetic Disinfectant sprayers to assist in the already increased cleaning procedures. The need to receive the opportunity to provide the vaccine to both staff and our inmate population is critical to help prevent further outbreaks at YCDOC.” -Chief Welch, Yakima County Department of Corrections

Additional Information

[Yakima County COVID-19 Testing Sites](#)

[Interim Guidance on Management of COVID-19 in Correctional and Detention Facilities](#)

[How to Protect Yourself & Others From COVID-19](#)

[Washington State Department of Health: Updated COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#)

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