

Cowlitz County COVID-19 data

Updated 09/21/20*

This report provides information that Cowlitz County residents can use to understand COVID-19 activity in our community. Cowlitz County Health & Human Services (CCHHS) will update these data weekly on Mondays, or the following business day if Monday is a holiday. Contact Askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us with any questions or comments.

Indicators which include both Cowlitz County to Washington State are not available as the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is currently updating its data dashboard.

Cases

- A total of **634 Cowlitz County residents**, or 0.57% of the population, have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- An average of **4 - 5 cases were reported each day** to CCHHS the week of 9/12 – 9/18.

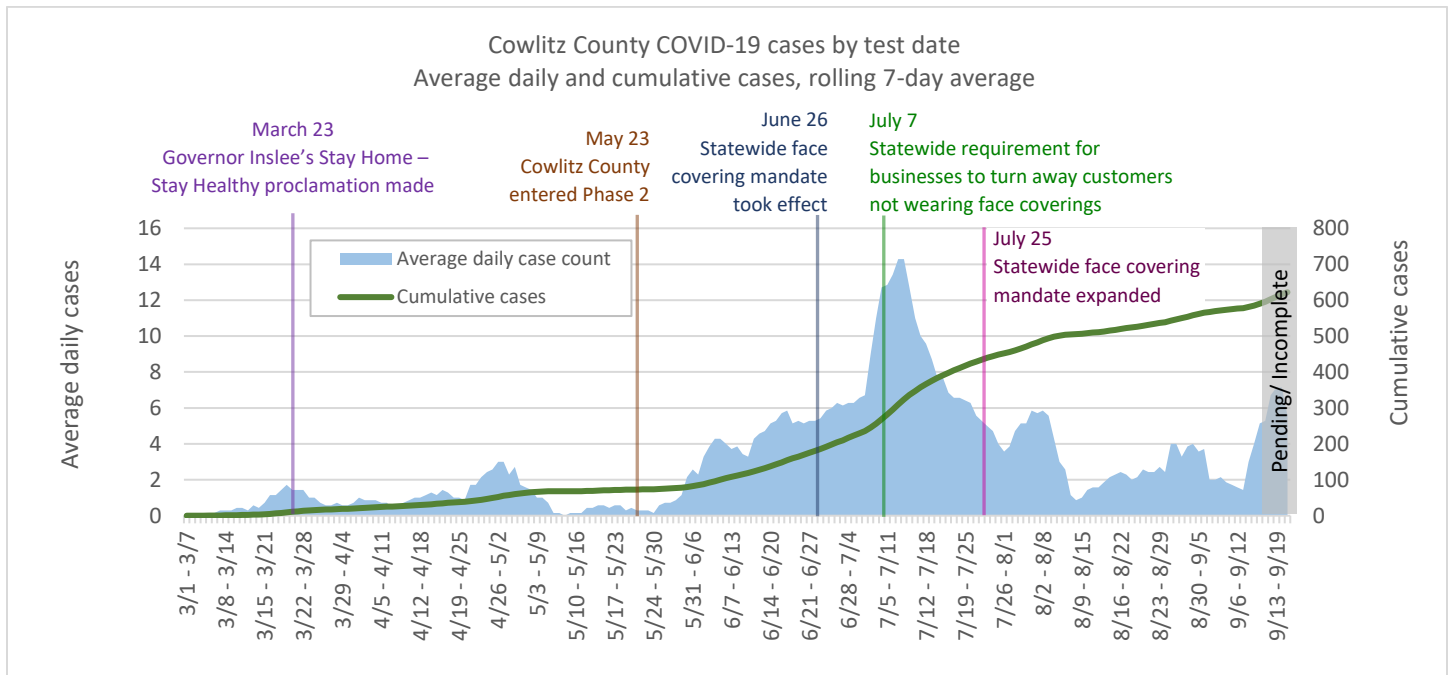
School reopening

- Cowlitz County is currently in the **MODERATE** level of COVID-19 activity, at **38 cases/100,000 population** from 9/2 - 9/15.
- Between 9/1 - 9/7, **2.1%** of Cowlitz County COVID-19 tests came back positive. This is below the level at which DOH recommends caution.
- Cowlitz County has been within or below the moderate level of COVID-19 activity for 6 ½ weeks (since 7/17 – 7/30)
- **Good news: We're still in moderate range**
Cowlitz County is currently well within the moderate range of COVID activity and meets the recommended criteria of being in this range for at least 3 weeks before considering expanding in-person learning. In addition, our percent positivity rate remains low.
- **Caution warranted: Cases are trending up**
We knew that this week's report would tell us whether or not we'd see an uptick in cases after the Labor Day holiday. If no uptick had occurred, we could have begun to consider in-person learning. However, because this metric has begun to increase, we'll need to wait for future reports to assess how high rates will spike before decreasing.
- **Recommendation**
With the recent spike in cases, CCHHS recommends school districts approach in-person learning with caution. While remaining in the moderate range, we support districts considering expanding in-person learning to elementary students as described by the WA Department of Health [Decision Tree](#) with the understanding that if activity rates continue to rise, a switch back to remote learning could be appropriate. If rates remain in the high range for greater than 3 weekly reports or if COVID-19 activity continues to accelerate, we will recommend that all school districts return to remote learning. We acknowledge the difficult balance of weighing the risk of COVID-19 infections in schools with the needs of children and families that in-person school helps address. We also acknowledge that each school district has different circumstances, and support school districts remaining in remote learning while we observe the extent of this spike in cases. We will continue to work closely with school districts to provide individualized guidance as local circumstances warrant.

*Recommendation verbiage was updated on 9/24/20.

Epidemiologic curve

We use the epidemiologic curve to determine how COVID-19 is spreading in our community. The cumulative number of cases is helpful to assess the overall burden of disease in our community.



Most members of our community have not had a COVID test, and those who have had only negative test results may have been infected long before or after they were tested. Consequently, we know that more people have had COVID-19 than those who have tested positive. The CDC [estimates](#) that the true number of COVID-19 cases in a community is at least ten (10) times the number of people who have tested positive. Based on this, we estimate that 5.7% of Cowlitz County residents have been infected with COVID-19. Note that this estimate is based on the best available data and studies to date and may change as more information is available in the future.

School reopening

These data illustrate how COVID-19 activity in our community compares to the metrics identified by the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Health for use in deciding when and how to reopen schools.

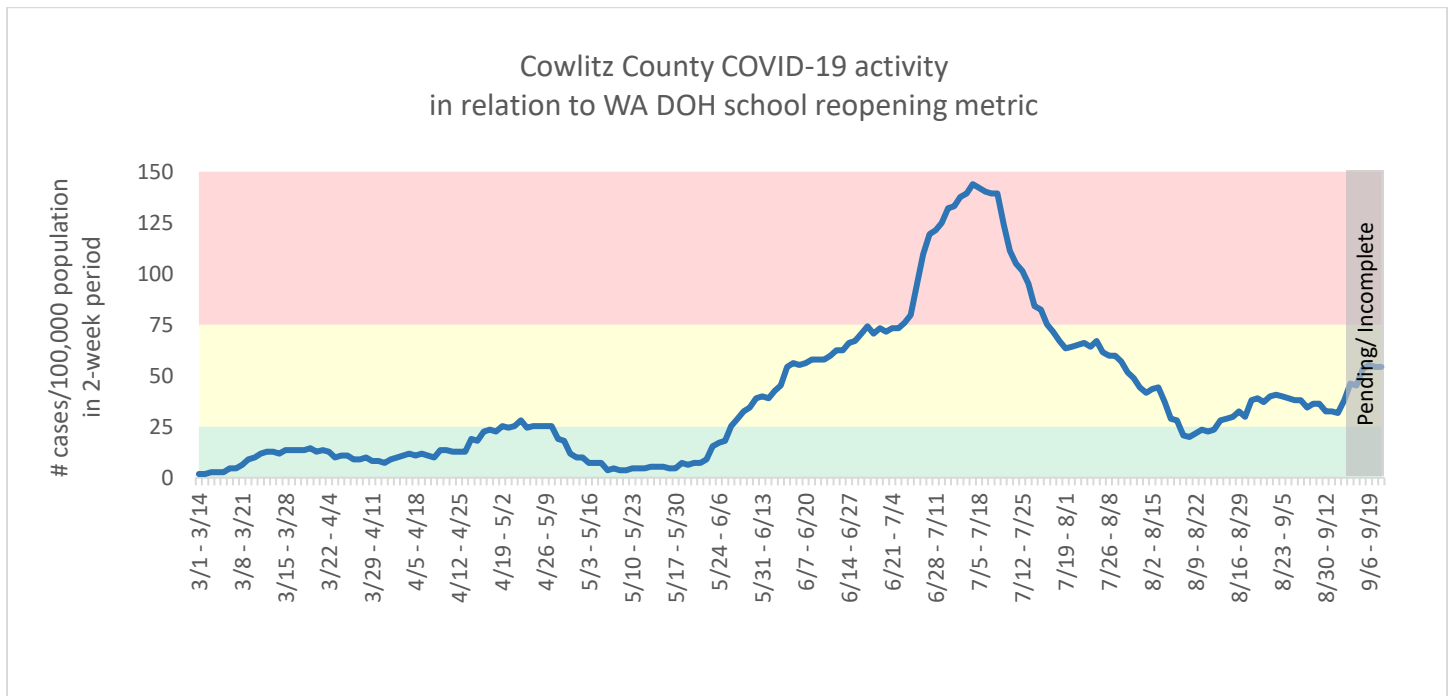
The calculation for Cowlitz County’s most recent rate is:

$$(42 \text{ total cases between } 9/2 \text{ and } 9/15) / (110,500 \text{ population}) * (100,000 \text{ multiplier}) = \mathbf{38 \text{ cases}/100,000 \text{ population}/2 \text{ weeks}}$$

School reopening plans will vary by district. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) have developed [guidance](#) for local health officials and school superintendents around health and safety recommendations. In addition, DOH has produced a [Decision Tree](#) to aid communities in reopening schools. The last page of the Decision Tree document includes an organized diagram outlining the factors and metrics to consider during this process.

The Decision Tree also recommends considering the percent positivity rate for tests. DOH recommends caution if this figure is above 5%. This indicator is also provided in this report.

School districts in Clark and Cowlitz Counties are coordinating their school reopening plans within the two-county region. As of 10:00am on 9/14, Clark County is currently at a moderate level of COVID activity, and has been in this range at least since the week of August 17. More information about Clark County can be found [here](#).



In general, CCHHS will consider recommending expanded in-person learning, beginning with the youngest students, after COVID-19 activity remains in the moderate range for at least three consecutive weeks. After each expansion, COVID-19 activity will again need to remain in the moderate range for at least three consecutive weeks before recommending additional groups of students for in-person learning.

High COVID-19 activity: DOH recommends distance learning with the option for limited in-person learning who need it most – such as children with disabilities. Sports and extracurricular activities should remain on pause.

Moderate COVID-19 activity: DOH recommends distance learning as described above, with gradual expansion of in-person education, beginning with elementary students. Younger students under the age of 10 benefit the most from in-person learning while also posing less risk for transmitting COVID-19 than older students. Most sports and extracurricular activities should remain on pause.

Low COVID-19 activity: DOH recommends full-time in-person learning for all elementary students and hybrid learning for middle and high school, eventually moving to in-person for middle and high school.

Cases by specimen collection date

The table below displays the number of COVID-19 cases by specimen collection date. These data have been used to construct the Epidemiologic curve and School reopening graphs. The specimen for the first COVID-19 case in Cowlitz County was collected on 3/11/20.

	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1		1	1	1	7	0	2			
2		0	3	1	7	2	1			
3		1	0	1	4	11	5			
4		1	2	2	6	10	3			
5		0	4	7	3	4	2			
6		2	0	3	11	10	1			
7		2	1	1	9	3	0			
8		0	0	8	23	1	2			
9		0	0	5	21	0	2			
10		1	0	4	16	2	3			
11	1	0	0	2	7	1	2			
12	0	0	0	5	7	1	1			
13	1	0	0	1	17	0	0			
14	0	2	0	2	9	1	11			
15	0	2	1	5	12	2	9			
16	1	1	0	4	9	3	10*			
17	0	2	0	11	9	3	4*			
18	0	0	2	4	4	1	12*			
19	2	1	0	6	1	3	4*			
20	0	1	1	4	10	2	0*			
21	2	1	0	3	9	2				
22	3	4	0	8	6	3				
23	1	0	1	5	7	2				
24	2	0	0	6	9	1				
25	2	0	0	5	3	2				
26	0	0	1	5	0	6				
27	0	7	0	5	5	1				
28	2	1	0	3	7	2				
29	0	7	0	9	4	5				
30	1	2	0	8	5	0				
31	0		3		4	12				

*Due to lags in reporting, data from the prior five days may be incomplete, and the current day is not reported. Please note that incomplete data counts may be different between this table and the LHJ notification date table. In addition, this table excludes cases with missing data for specimen collection date.

Cases by LHJ notification date

Case count: 634 (2 cases currently missing a specimen collection date).

Community members have been interested in COVID-19 cases as they are reported to CCHHS. The table below displays the number of COVID-19 cases reported to CCHHS each day. Cowlitz County's first COVID-19 case was reported to CCHHS on 3/20/20.

	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1		2	6	1	11	3	1			
2		0	5	2	6	7	4			
3		0	1	0	3	3	4			
4		1	1	1	3	6	10			
5		1	2	1	1	5	2			
6		1	1	6	14	7	2			
7		0	2	5	4	7	4			
8		1	3	3	9	6	0			
9		1	0	1	7	1	0			
10		1	0	6	26	8	3			
11		0	0	3	9	1	4			
12		1	0	4	7	2	1			
13		1	0	4	23	3	2			
14		0	0	2	5	0	2			
15		0	0	8	12	1	4			
16		2	0	1	11	1	12			
17		1	0	3	14	4	5			
18		0	1	8	5	2	8			
19		0	1	11	2	2	3*			
20	2	4	1	1	11	3	17*			
21	1	1	1	2	4	2	0*			
22	0	0	0	7	8	0				
23	0	2	1	6	8	3				
24	0	3	0	5	11	3				
25	2	0	0	5	5	2				
26	4	0	0	5	4	2				
27	2	0	0	2	9	3				
28	3	0	0	1	7	4				
29	0	7	0	11	1	2				
30	1	1	0	6	8	2				
31	1		0		5	4				

*Data from the current day and prior two days may be incomplete. Counts may be different between this table and the Specimen collection date table due to incomplete data and the fact that most cases are reported to us after the specimen collection date.

Indicator definitions

Epidemiologic curve

This indicator is the average number of cases identified each day in Cowlitz County, over a week's time, based on the specimen collection date. This graph only displays case counts and does not involve a denominator. Because of reporting lags, the last 6 days of data are considered incomplete and are therefore greyed out. This graph also informs the case, hospitalization, and death counts on the first page.

Data source: CCHHS case log, including cases reported to CCHHS as of 8:30am on the "Updated" date on the first page of this report.

Cases by specimen collection & LHJ notification dates

Specimen collection data are used to calculate the graphs in the Epidemiologic curve and School reopening graphs. Cases are also reported by LHJ notification date due to community interest. Note that daily and total counts will be different between these two tables because the LHJ notification date is typically after the specimen collection date.

Data source: CCHHS case log, including cases reported to CCHHS as of 8:30am on the "Updated" date on the first page of this report.

School reopening

This indicator can be used to understand how COVID-19 activity in Cowlitz County compares to the metrics outlined in the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) and DOH's Decision Tree for reopening schools. It is a population rate as opposed to a count. The numerator is the total number of cases over a two-week time period, based on the specimen collection date. The denominator is the April 1, 2020 Cowlitz County population estimate provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management. Our last step is multiplying this figure by 100,000 to give us a rate per 100,000. Because of reporting lags, the last 6 days of data are considered incomplete and are therefore greyed out. The reported figure is for the two-week time period ending on the 6th day prior to this report date. DOH COVID-19 activity level groups are color-coded for reference.

Data sources: CCHHS case log, including cases reported to CCHHS as of 8:30am on the "Updated" date on the first page of this report. Population denominator obtained from Washington State Office of Financial Management [Population Estimates for 2020](#).