

# Urgent News Release #71

## Richland County Emergency Management

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## **RICHLAND COUNTY ADVANCES TO PHASE II OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC REOPENING GUIDANCE**

*Richland Center, WI:* Richland County Health and Human Services-Public Health staff have been closely monitoring local, regional, and state conditions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Two barometers, decreases in hospitalizations/ICU admissions and the reproductive number of the virus, demonstrate that the disease is spreading more slowly. In recent weeks, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has reported a consistent downward trend in COVID-19 cases. It is known that, regionally, Crawford, Sauk, and Dane counties have progressed to Phase II.

In response to these observations, Richland County Public Health is advancing Richland County to Phase II. Metrics have been evaluated in 7 specific areas to determine if the level of county disease incidence is stabilizing, testing is robust, source(s) of infection can be identified, and whether patient care and disease suppression can be managed by our local healthcare and public health systems. Richland County has scored a GREEN LIGHT in 5 of these 7 areas:

1. Percentage of confirmed positive tests to the total tests over a fourteen-day period (.37%).

2. Numbers of confirmed cases over a fourteen-day period (1 case).
3. The ability to treat patients without implementing crisis standards of care (Yes).
4. Stable or decreasing numbers of infected healthcare workers within a fourteen-day period (0 cases).
5. The ability of public health staff to quickly contact and facilitate isolation and quarantine with confirmed cases and their contacts (93%).

Of the last 2 metrics, Richland County scored a YELLOW LIGHT in average testing numbers per day and scored a RED LIGHT in the known source of infection.

Phase II reopening guidelines provide:

- Larger numbers of persons to gather at both inside and outdoor venues. A mass gathering is defined as a planned event with a large number of individuals in attendance, such as a concert, festival, meeting, training, conference, performance, show, or sporting event. Indoors, a mass gathering would permit 50 individuals or less to congregate, not including employees. Outdoors, a mass gathering would allow 100 persons or less to come together, not including employees. Individuals must maintain physical distancing.
- Businesses may offer services at 50% of approved capacity levels, ensuring that customers who are not part of a household are separated by six feet. Floor markings to physically separate customers may be helpful. Employees should wear face coverings, especially when social distancing cannot be maintained. Use of barriers and contactless payment transactions are encouraged. Additionally, disinfection of high-touch and commonly-used areas and shared equipment is expected. If a business can facilitate remote work for employees, stagger work shifts, offer virtual

services, or promote carry-out or curbside pick-up options, these efforts will effectively reduce the numbers of persons on-site.

- Religious institutions would now be able to accommodate 50% of each building's capacity, as long as household groups could be separated. Outdoor services would fall under the mass gathering definition.
- Public entities such as playgrounds, pools, public courts, and fields could reopen. Games and competitions could be allowed for low risk sports with physical distancing and minimal sharing of equipment and sanitizing such between users. Medium- to high-risk sports would be not be allowed under this phase of re-opening.

This is a critical time for Richland County to maintain the momentum of minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Keeping our families, friends, and our community safe will permit us to progress to Phase III and assure that we are able to continue to enjoy activities with others on a long-term basis.

Citizens are encouraged to check out the Richland County COVID-19 Dashboard which offers helpful data: <https://covid.co.richland.wi.us/2020/04/21/richland-county-covid-19-dashboard/>. For the most up-to-date COVID-19 information, follow Richland County Health & Human Services on Facebook or consult the following websites:

- ❖ Richland County:  
<https://covid.co.richland.wi.us>
- ❖ The Greater Richland Area Chamber of Commerce  
[www.gorcchamber.com](http://www.gorcchamber.com)
- ❖ Wisconsin Department of Health Services:  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19)
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/)

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