



COVID-19

General Information and Response FAQ

Last updated: August 12, 2020

This is a rapidly evolving situation.

This document will be updated as needed with the most current information.

The COVID-19 Pandemic is still a very real and serious situation.

Please continue to take precautions, including social distancing.

Wear a mask whenever you're around anyone from outside your household.

DUE TO AN INCREASE IN POSITIVE CASES TIED TO TRIBAL EMPLOYEES, PGST GOVERNMENT OFFICES HAVE REVERTED TO MINIMAL STAFFING LEVELS. This action began on August 10 and will continue for at least two weeks.

Tribal leadership is doing everything they can to keep the community and staff safe and healthy during the pandemic. If you have any questions, please contact call the Emergency Operations center at 360-297-9689.

The PGST Health Clinic will test any community member, employee, or member of an immediate household for COVID-19. Some restrictions may apply. To set up an appointment or discuss whether a test is needed, please call the Health Clinic at 360-297-2840.

ABOUT COVID-19 & THE PANDEMIC

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus, also known as "Coronavirus Disease 2019." You can find more information about COVID-19 and the source and spread of the illness at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html>.

Isn't the pandemic over? Aren't the new cases tied to more testing?

No. In fact, Washington state—like the majority of states across the nation—have seen a resurgence of cases, mirroring or exceeding case counts/percentages from March 2020 when many areas shut down schools and businesses.

While access to testing has gotten much better throughout the state and country since the start of the pandemic, the rise in cases cannot be attributed to testing. The increase in the percentage of positive cases among the tests completed indicate that case counts are rising. In Washington state, on average, as of late July 2020, the percentage of positive cases is around 6%. In Kitsap County, it's around 2%. Experts say the ideal positive percentage would not exceed 1%. Increased testing with no rising case counts would actually show a declining percentage of positive cases.

Is the Tribe testing staff for COVID-19?

Yes. With the reopening of the Tribal government and The Point Casino & Hotel, the Tribe implemented a comprehensive program that tests ALL on-site staff every two weeks. All on-site staff are required to test every two weeks as a pre-requisite for employment.

With the August 16 shutdown, this testing becomes even more important. It will help determine if government offices can begin to open up after two weeks or a longer shutdown is necessary.

You can read more about the program in the May issue of *Syecem*:

<https://www.pgst.nsn.us/images/s-klallam-view/May-2020-syecem.pdf>

I'm young and healthy. Why should I be concerned about the spread of COVID-19?

COVID-19 infections grow exponentially, meaning they double (e.g. 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc) within the population in a given period of time. This is the rapid growth pattern we've seen as the virus has spread in [Washington state and throughout the U.S.](#)

Exponential growth continues to be possible as long as there is at least one infected person—even if they aren't showing symptoms—who is having regular contact with others who are not infected.

COVID-19 is particularly harmful to older people and those with compromised immune systems and/or people with serious underlying health conditions, such as heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes. The mortality rate for COVID-19 begins to increase slightly for people in their 40s and rises exponentially every decade after that.

While younger people are less likely to die from COVID-19, those aged 20-39 make up the greatest number of new cases in Kitsap County as of late July 2020. Those who get sick may not die, but there's [some evidence of lingering serious side effects associated with some who became ill](#). This includes possible damage to the heart, lungs, and kidneys.

Anyone contracting the illness can be a- or pre-symptomatic for days, spreading the illness to those much more vulnerable. For these reasons, it is essential that everyone practice proper hygiene, social distancing, and mask wearing practices.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms include fever (100.5 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C), dry cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, sore throat, muscle aches, congestion, nausea, and diarrhea. Some report a loss of taste and/or smell as an early symptom. Symptoms appear 2-14 days after exposure.

It is very important to remember that even if you don't feel sick or exhibit any symptoms, you can still be a carrier and infect others. This is why social distancing to control the spread is so important.

Have there been any cases of COVID-19 among PGST community members or staff?

Yes, but all have recovered. There have been no outbreaks (defined as at least two cases traced to a single source). There have not been any community member or staff deaths linked to COVID-19.

If I have symptoms of COVID-19, what should I do?

The Health Clinic will test any community member, employee, or member of an immediate household. Please call 360-297-2840 to set up an appointment. For individual tests, the Health Clinic does have access to a rapid response test that can return results in little as 15 minutes.

If you're having a medical emergency, like difficulty breathing, please call 911.

PROTECTING YOURSELF

What can I do to protect myself from COVID-19?

The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19 is by taking some simple common-sense precautions, including:

- Wear a mask while in public, even in common areas with limited contact. The exceptions are while exercising/recreating outside where you will have no or limited contact with those outside your household. This is a state-wide mandate and enforceable with a fine.

Need a mask? Call the Tribal Center at 360-297-2646.

- Stay home if you're sick.
- Practice social distancing, which includes maintaining a distance of six feet when you must be around others.
- Stay home, if you can. Stick to essential errands only, like the grocery store, and avoid being in large groups of people.

- Limit or cancel travel, especially non-essential travel to an area with a [high case count than Kitsap County](#). Avoid any travel that requires being around large gatherings of people, such as by plane or cruise ship.
- Stay away from people over the age of 60 or those with underlying health conditions. You might be a carrier and display no symptoms!
- Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze, and discard used tissues in the trash.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Do not give hugs or handshakes and avoid other direct physical contact.
- Do not provide or consume communal food.

PROTECTING THE COMMUNITY

What actions have the Port Gamble S’Klallam tribal leadership taken to protect staff and the community?

In March, Tribal leadership closed all offices and non-essential businesses.

With the implementation of health and safety protocols—including a staff-wide testing program—the Tribe and NKDC has been able to reopen all tribal businesses and return to 100% staffing levels in government offices.

What are the current community and staff restrictions as a part of the Tribe’s reopening plan?

High-risk populations, including Elders and those with chronic conditions such as autoimmune disorders and diabetes, are encouraged to continue to stay home. If you’re a high-risk member of the community, please call 360-297-2646 for any needs.

ALL Tribal community members and staff are encouraged to continue to stay home as much as possible outside of work and essential activities, such as grocery shopping or doctor’s appointments. When around anyone outside your household, wear a mask and practice social distancing. This includes during outdoor activities.

Government Offices

- 100% of Tribal staff have returned to the office or are working from home as approved and appropriate.
- No on-site visitors, clients, or patients without an appointment.
- Tribal board and committees may meet in person. Masks and social distancing are required.

Recreation

- Limit activities to those within your own household or no more than five people outside your household in any given week.

- Follow protocols related to water recreation, including race canoes and paddle boards.
- When in a public space and around those from outside your household, wear a mask and practice social distancing.

*NOTE: The baseball field and basketball courts at Jake Jones Park are now open. The skate park and playgrounds will open soon. Children must be accompanied by an adult. **These spaces and the beach at Point Julia—in all cases—are from Tribal community members ONLY.** PGST members living off-reservation may come on reservation to use the beach.*

Gatherings

- Limit gatherings to those within your own household or no more than five people outside your household in any given week.
- Sales of community food allowed with safety protocols, including wearing masks/gloves during preparation and frequent hand washing.
- Funerals may be held with up to 100 attendees. Masks and social distancing are required.

Travel

Non-essential (e.g. vacation) travel is discouraged at this time.

If travelling for non-essential purposes, avoid travelling by plane or other group setting where social distancing is not possible (e.g. cruise ship). Also, limit travel to places that have a lower case percentage count than Kitsap County. This includes within Washington state.

Find the latest case percentage counts by geographic location:

United States: <https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases>

Washington State:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020COVID19/DataDashboard>

Staff members travelling for non-essential purposes will be alerted to the risks by their manager and may be required to quarantine upon returning home. All staff returning from non-essential travel are required to test negative for COVID-19 before returning.

Are there restrictions on harvesting food or gathering medicine?

No, as long as you do it alone or only with people in your household.

How are we taking care of our Elders?

It is extremely important that Elders stay in their homes. We have provided Elder homes with signs to let people know that they are practicing social distancing and are not accepting in-person visitors. Please respect this.

We will not transport Elders to grocery stores, but are here to assist with shopping or other needs. We encourage our Elders to call Alena George at 360-337-9935 for any help they might need.

How can I help members of the community, especially elders, stay safe?

The most important thing you can do is follow the tips to protect yourself listed above, especially practicing social distancing and wearing a mask. Gathering with extended family and friends is an important part of our community, but that physical closeness needs to stop for now.

We do encourage you though to check in on the people you care about via text, phone, video chat, or instant message. Ask if an elder needs groceries or medication. You can run those essential errands for them and leave the bag on the doorstep to minimize contact.

Is the food bank open?

Yes. It is stocked and available.

Is S'Klallam Worship Center still open?

S'Klallam Worship Center has moved services online. You can worship every Sunday at 11 am through their [Facebook page](#). They also are offering Parking Lot Prayer Services every other Tuesday. Please visit their Facebook page for details.

KIDS & SCHOOL

My kids really wants to play with their friends. Is that okay?

All gatherings need to be limited and avoided as possible. It is very difficult for kids to practice social distancing and mask wearing. For this reason, we recommend against play dates or sleepovers.

What are the plans for the school year 2020-2021?

Currently, North Kitsap schools (along with the majority, if not all, schools in Kitsap County) will offer remote learning for all students for at least the first nine weeks of the year. After that time, the situation will be assessed to see if schools can move forward with hybrid in-classroom/remote learning. This will all evolve as the pandemic does.

Read NKSD Superintendent Evans Letter to Parents announcing remote learning for at least the first nine weeks of the school year (7/28/2020):

<http://nkschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=419589&pageId=24051737&fbclid=IwAR1zpkJkqg8tfBlj4K3nwIfllcR6bc1xHNCjgQJebfz5LZpOeR-tboik0ko>

You can find the latest North Kitsap School District plans here:

<http://www.nkschools.org/cms/one.aspx?portalId=419589&pageId=23930749>

Parents may also choose a 100% online learning model. This can be a good choice for families where the child or other household members are high risk. Find more information here: <http://www.nkschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=419589&pageId=24051562>

TRIBAL BUSINESS & OTHER ENTITIES

Is [The Point Casino & Hotel](#) open?

After closing on March 16 in accordance with Governor Jay Inslee's Executive Order, NKDC created a comprehensive reopening plan to ensure the safety of guests and staff.

The Point Casino & Hotel reopened on June 1, 2020 with new safety protocols in place including mandatory masks for staff and guests, rearranging of games to encourage social distancing, and more. Read about the The Point's 11-Point plan for reopening:

<https://www.thepointcasinoandhotel.com/covid-19-update>

Are the Tribe's other businesses open?

Yes, as follows:

- [Gliding Eagle Marketplace](#): Open from 6 am to 10 pm, daily. Gas pumps open 24 hours day. Only eight customers are allowed in the store at any one time. Social distancing and masks are required. Ordering by phone is available by calling 360-297-7412.
- [Gliding Eagle Espresso](#): Open daily at 7 am. Closes at 5 pm Monday thru Saturday; 4 pm on Sundays.
- [Gliding Eagle Deli](#): Open from 9 am to 5 pm, daily. To-go order only from [limited menu](#). Pre-order by phone at 360-297-7423.
- [High Point Cannabis](#): Open 9 am to 7 pm, daily. Masks and social distancing are required. Curbside pick-up available by calling 360-297-6191. Online ordering is also available at www.highpointmj.com.
- [Kountry Korner](#): Open from 11 am to 7 pm, daily. Gas pumps open 24 hours a day. Masks and social distancing are required in store.

Is [Heronswood](#) open?

[Heronswood](#) is open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10 am to 3 pm (last garden entry at 2:30 pm) through October 25 as conditions and guidelines allow. Masks/facial coverings are required at all times while on property.

Visit Heronswood with no-risk by taking one of their [virtual tours](#).

Check the Heronswood Garden website for the most current information: www.heronswoodgarden.org/visit.

