

3/11/20

LOCAL HEALTH OFFICER ORDER ADDRESSING COVID-19 IN KING COUNTY

What are the actions?

The Governor's Emergency Proclamation prohibits events with 250 or more people in King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties.

In King County, our Health Officer, Dr. Jeff Duchin, is issuing a parallel local Health Officer Order to prohibit gatherings of 250 people or more. In addition, the local order is prohibiting events of less than 250 people, unless measures are taken by event organizers to minimize risk.

Who enforces?

Our initial community mitigation strategies have been well-accepted, and we believe these new actions will be accepted in the same way to protect our community's health. We don't believe active enforcement will be necessary.

For the King County Order, violating a Local Health Officer Order is a misdemeanor. Our focus will be on helping people understand the importance of avoiding gatherings of people, rather than citations.

We will not be actively searching for violations, but if we receive reports of events contrary to the order, we will reach out to the organizer to educate and provide guidance.

How is an event defined?

For the purposes of this Order, an "event" is a gathering for business, social, or recreational activities including, but not limited to, community, civic, public, leisure, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers; and similar activities.

When exactly will these measures be implemented?

They go into effect today, March 11, 2020.

Why are you doing two actions, local and state?

The Local Health Officer has additional powers under the law that the Governor does not.

The Governor has the authority to cancel, close or restrict.

The local health officer authority is broader. He can take actions like the Governor's to prohibit events, and also require additional measures, such as to put conditions on meetings, like this new order for prohibiting meetings of under 250 people unless social distancing measures are put into effect.

How long will these orders last?

The Governor's Emergency Proclamation goes through March 31, 2020.

The Local Health Officer Order has no specified end date.