



New framework Q&A

The new risk framework will help Oregonians get through the winter and spring safely. COVID-19 vaccines will arrive soon. But until then, and until we reach herd immunity, we will have to continue these mitigation measures.

Q: Why is Oregon changing from phases to the new framework?

A: The phases did not allow a lot of movement. The new framework is more adaptable.

Q: How does the new framework work?

A: To understand how the new framework works, it's helpful to know three things:

1. The new framework is based on the [school metrics data](#).
2. Oregon's 36 counties are divided into three groupings for the framework:
 - Large counties with more than 30,000 residents
 - Medium counties with between 15,000 and 30,000 residents
 - Small counties with fewer than 15,000 residents
3. The new framework divides risk into four categories based on the spread of COVID-19:
 - Lower Risk
 - Moderate Risk
 - High Risk
 - Extreme Risk

Q: How do counties get placed into risk categories?

A: For large counties (population >30,000), the positivity rate is one of two metrics considered to calculate the risk category. The other factor is the case rate per 100,000. The overall determination reflects the most restrictive measure. So, for example, if Josephine County is in the Moderate category for rate and the Extreme category for percent positivity, then the county would fall into the most restrictive category, the Extreme category.

For medium counties (population 15,000 to <30,000), the positivity rate is one of two metrics considered to calculate the risk level. The other is the number of cases. The overall determination reflects the most restrictive measure.

For small counties (population <15,000), only the number of cases is considered to determine the risk category.

Q: How often can a county move from one risk category to another?

A: The school metrics data is pulled every Monday and used to determine county risk categories. You can find it posted on the OHA COVID-19 website.

The first week is the “warning week.” There is no movement of counties and no changes on the risk level map on the OHA and [Governor’s office](#) websites.

The second week is the “action week.” The data is pulled again on Monday. The Governor’s office notifies counties if they are likely to move from one risk category to another based on the new data. The Governor’s office also sends a press release about any changes. The county formally moves into the new risk category at the end of the week.

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