

## Public Health



# Sauk County Public Health

505 Broadway Street, Suite 372

Baraboo, WI 53913

Telephone: (608) 355- 3290 Fax: (608)355-4329

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 5, 2020

Contact: Tim Lawther, Health Officer  
(608) 355-3290

## SAUK COUNTY PREPARING FOR PHASE 2 OF REOPENING WITH NEW TOOL FOR BUSINESSES

Sauk County, WI – Sauk County is currently in Phase 1 of its gradual reopening and is poised to move to Phase 2 soon, with fewer restrictions on activities, if the data continue to demonstrate limited spread, low levels of new COVID-19 cases, and capacity to quickly isolate new cases and close contacts of those new cases. The timing of Phase 2 of Sauk County’s reopening will depend on what local and regional data show about the risk and spread of COVID-19 in Sauk County. Phase 2 could start as early as June 8, or it could be delayed based on what the data indicate.

Many of the individual precautions and business recommendations will remain the same in Phase 2 as they are in Phase 1. The biggest change to the guidance will be that groups up to 50 people will be able to gather in one space in Phase 2, up from 10 people in our current Phase 1. “The phases of our reopening plan are really meant to provide a guide to continue to safely reopen our community based on an ongoing analysis of the risk and spread of COVID in our County,” said Tim Lawther, Sauk County Health Officer. “I am optimistic that we are on the right track.” Phase 3 could *potentially* begin at the end of June, with many restrictions lifted. The movement from one phase to another will always be based on the best available data, and will not occur unless the data support the move.

Sauk County Public Health announced today that there is a new self-assessment tool available on the Sauk County Public Health website (<https://forms.gle/WaCXX3opxcCMkkC38>) that business owners can use to help them identify ways they can further reduce the risk of coronavirus infecting their customers and employees as they prepare for Phase 2. This new tool takes 15-20 minutes to complete anonymously online and will provide a score and resources that a business can use to assess how they’re doing and how they can operate even more safely. “Businesses can complete this anonymous self-assessment to help them get a better sense of opportunities for further improvements in their policies and operations to help keep people safe while in their establishment,” said Lawther.

According to Lawther, many Sauk County businesses have developed and implemented very good plans to help protect their customers and staff from coronavirus. He stresses that all businesses should have already implemented the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) guidance (<https://wedc.org/reopen-guidelines/>) for their type of business, and reviewed the Sauk County Public Health (SCPH) toolkits (<https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/publichealth/business-guidance#ActionSteps>) to implement changes in their business to help keep customers and employees safe while in their establishment. The new Sauk County self-assessment tool is a more individualized process that a business owner can use to adapt guidance to their unique business circumstances.

If an individual business has a specific question about guidance and best practice after they have reviewed WEDC and SCPH guidance and completed the self-assessment tool, they can email [covid19@saukcountywi.gov](mailto:covid19@saukcountywi.gov) and we will compile answers to those questions on a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page on our website.

During Phase 1 that we are in now, general recommendations for businesses include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit group sizes to less than 10 people; do not host large events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change policies and protocol to ensure 6-foot social distancing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor staff symptoms and send staff home if any symptoms</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage staff and customers to wear cloth face coverings; provide PPE for staff in high-risk areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disinfect frequently touched surfaces after each customer and regularly throughout the day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train staff on handwashing, cleaning, and disinfecting; post schedules and keep to them</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use single-use materials wherever possible (menus, etc.), or sanitize reusable materials after each use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize pickup, delivery, and appointment scheduling to limit numbers of people at one time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with customers and staff the protective measures the business is taking for them</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider transparent barriers between customers and staff in high-congregation areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stagger shifts; telework where possible; stagger use of shared spaces; limit non-essential staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement no-contact policies for staff and customers, including payment and customer service</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not provide buffets or other food or drink self-service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not offer live music of any kind, including choirs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up office and common staff spaces to ensure 6-foot distance</li> </ul>

Individuals also have a responsibility to help protect themselves, their families, and our community from coronavirus, says Lawther. In Phase 1, SCPH recommends that everyone continue to maintain a 6-foot social distance from people outside their household as much as possible, disinfect frequently touched surfaces regularly, wash hands, stay home when feeling sick, and avoid crowds of more than 10 people. Precautions people should take to help protect themselves during specific activities can be found on the SCPH website (<https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/publichealth/protect-yourself-others#PrecautionsList>). “People should also observe what businesses are doing to help reduce the risk of coronavirus for their customers and employees,” said Lawther. “If you think there are too many people in the establishment to maintain social distance, for example, or you feel at risk for another reason, you should leave.”

Public health guidance emphasizes the importance of COVID-19 testing when moving forward with reopening. “It is important to remember that we need to conduct significantly more testing across Sauk County so that we can identify and isolate new cases very quickly,” said Lawther. “Disease and contact investigations are important ways to prevent an outbreak. But success relies on lots of testing so that we can identify potential disease clusters and prevent an outbreak from delaying our return to a more normal life.”

Sauk County’s success in reopening safely depends on the business community, residents, and visitors each taking some responsibility to protect all of us from another COVID-19 outbreak. “Many of our local businesses are doing a great job making their business safer for customers and employees. And many residents are doing a great job of protecting themselves and their families. If we continue those efforts, and encourage one another to engage in community life safely, we will be able to avoid a COVID-19 outbreak and stay on our path returning to normalcy.”

For more information on COVID-19 and Sauk County’s response, please visit the SCPH website at <https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/publichealth/coronavirus>.

###