



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | 9.23.20

CONTACT

David Tuan, City Administrator
City of Williston | Administration
701.713.3800
davidt@ci.williston.nd.us

City of Williston and COVID-19 Risk Level

WILLISTON, N.D. – On September 23, Governor Doug Burgum made additional announcements related to COVID-19 risk levels in some of North Dakota’s counties.

On September 3, Williams County transitioned from the Low Risk level (green) to the Moderate Risk level (yellow) under the ND Smart Restart color-coded health guidance.

Currently, Williams County remains in the yellow range, alongside five additional counties.

However, with a high positivity rate, Williams County is rapidly approaching the High Risk (orange) level.

In response, the Williams County Commission and City Commission convened a special meeting at 2:00 p.m. on September 23 to discuss the current and potential COVID-19 risk level and COVID-19’s impact to the community.

Commissioners on both sides echoed the use of masks as one of the easiest methods to help slow the spread and lower the daily positivity rate.

In addition, Commissioners approved the creation of a joint Williams County COVID-19 Response Team to further coordinate a community-wide response.

As a means of helping to lower positive cases, the City Commission also adopted a resolution to suspend until further notice the use of liquor licenses for the purposes of special events.

“As residents of Williams County and citizens of the City of Williston, it is critical that we do what we can by curtailing special events and large gatherings,” emphasized City of Williston Mayor, Howard Klug. “Our high positivity rate remains a concern, and a change in risk level for Williams County is imminent if our rate does not decrease.”

According to the ND Smart Restart guidelines, a transition to the High Risk level would include the following changes:

- **Restaurants, Bars, & Food Service** – Curbside pickup, takeout, and delivery only. No dine-in service.

- **Retail (includes grocery and convenience stores, and pharmacies)** – Employers exercise extreme caution, with employees working remotely when possible. Restrict unnecessary visitors from entering.
- **Hotel, Tourism, & Accommodations** – Limited operations. Cancel gatherings of any size where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- **Events & Gatherings** – Gatherings of 10 or fewer are allowed when social distancing precautions can be met. Cancel gatherings of any size where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- **Personal Care Services** – Personal care services are closed.
- **Fitness Centers/Gyms and Sporting events** – Fitness centers and gyms are closed. Indoor/outdoor sporting events are closed. Pools are closed.
- **Child Care** – May remain open for essential services.
- **Schools and Universities** – Varies based on individual plans and Governor directive.

Williams County has more than 2,200 businesses including at least 70 restaurants and bars, 53 personal care shops (i.e. tattoo parlors, salons, massage therapists, etc.), 38 hotels, and 7 grocery stores.

“While not where we want to remain, to be at the Moderate Risk level means we can keep our businesses open,” explained Mayor Klug. “We all need to do what we can to reduce our rate and not advance to the High Risk level.”

Citizens are strongly encouraged to minimize spread through social distancing, limiting gatherings to fewer than 10 people, wearing a mask in public, respecting posted guidelines for businesses, and getting tested.

“We have strong and adequate testing here in Williams County and I encourage everyone to get tested,” added Mayor Klug. “Increased frequency of testing generates better data for our community that will then be used to assess the health of the community. Avoiding testing may artificially increase the positivity rate by reducing the sample size.”

COVID-19 testing events are free, take only minutes, and are open to the entire community.

The next community COVID-19 testing event organized by Upper Missouri District Health Unit is scheduled for Monday, September 28 from 4-6pm on the campus of Williston State College. Walk up and drive thru options are available.

Vehicles will be allowed to line up along the route starting at 3:30 p.m. Testing will go until 6:00 p.m. or until all test kits have been used.

Vehicles wishing to access the testing are asked to enter from University Avenue before turning onto Pioneer Boulevard. Traffic control officers will provide additional guidance.

Pre-register for testing at testreg.nd.gov to minimize waiting time and expedite testing.

At this time, the City of Williston’s internal COVID Tiered Response Guidelines introduced on September 10, 2020 in addition to other departmental measures will remain in effect at the Moderate level.

For additional information on future local testing events, please follow the Upper Missouri District Health Unit on Facebook ([@uppermissouridistricthealthunit](#)).

For additional COVID-19-related information at the Williams County level, please visit www.williamsnd.com/Department/Communications/COVID-19.

For additional information on the ND Smart Restart plan, please visit: www.ndresponse.gov/covid-19-resources/covid-19-business-and-employer-resources/nd-smart-restart/nd-smart-restart-protocols

###

PHOTO: City of Williston COVID-19 update image.

View release online at www.cityofwilliston.com.

Follow the City of Williston on Facebook (@cityofwilliston), Instagram (@cityofwilliston), and LinkedIn.

For more information, please visit www.cityofwilliston.com, call 701.577.8100, or stop by 22 East Broadway, Williston, ND.

COW20-9-12