



South Central Public Health District
1020 Washington Street North
Twin Falls, ID 83301
208-737-5900
www.phd5.idaho.gov



NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 case investigators ask residents to help report details of their illness, as a rapidly increasing case rate overwhelms public health efforts

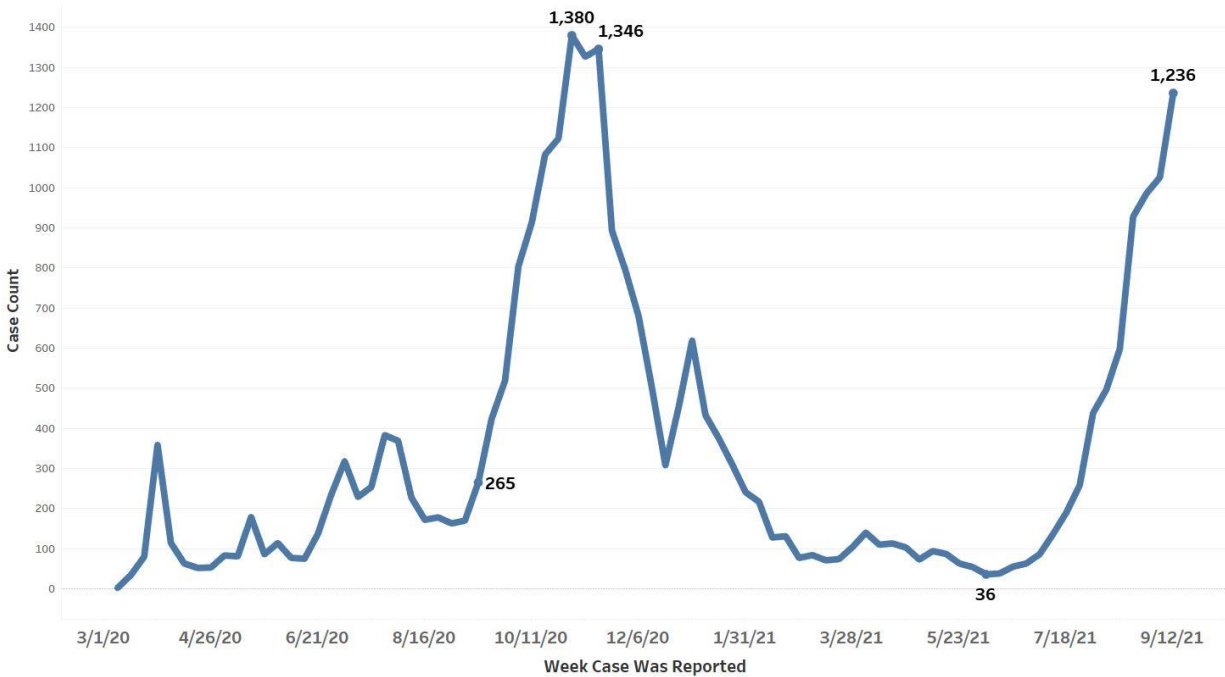
SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO – As COVID-19 cases continue to surge in the region, South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) case investigators are asking residents to self-report symptoms and other illness data on a secure online [form](#) to help epidemiologists track the disease and inform residents who are at risk of exposure.

“When disease spreads this quickly it impacts our community on a number of levels. For the last few weeks we’ve been talking about the growing case trend overwhelming our hospitals. Now, nearly every county is seeing outbreaks in local schools, illness spreading through businesses, and disease investigators who can’t keep up with the rate cases are being reported,” said Logan Hudson, SCPHD division administrator.

In the last full calendar week, 1,236 COVID-19 cases were reported to South Central Public Health District. In the peak of last year’s biggest surge, a little over 1,300 cases were reported in a week. With several more weeks expected before the cases peak in this surge, public health is concerned more people will get sick than reported even during last year’s massive outbreak. (See the graph below)

“Don’t wait for public health to call you. Help us continue to track this disease by reporting your illness on our online form,” said Tanis Maxwell, Epidemiology Program Manager. “It’s also important to let your close contacts know as soon as you get your test results so they can also take precautions.”

COVID-19 cases organized by week the cases were reported to SCPHD



Today SCPHD released the latest regional risk level assessment, with all eight counties in the region rated in the critical risk tier. This rating is primarily due to the rapidly climbing case rate in the local counties, the critical impact those cases have had on area hospitals, and public health inability to reach everyone who has tested positive or who has been exposed to the disease.

Electronic databases that providers use to report cases to SCPHD are also at capacity. This impacts SCPHD’s ability to have an accurate daily case count.

“Even as we are reporting a growing number of cases in our region, we know some cases are stuck in limbo waiting for enough space in these databases for us to download the information and report it,” said Maxwell. “That means, for some, it could be weeks before we even have your contact information in hand to reach out.”

SCPHD wants to remind residents what steps to take if they test positive for COVID-19 or has had close contact with anyone who has COVID-19.

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, get tested and stay away from others while you wait for results.
- If you test positive, self-isolate for 10 days since symptoms first appeared and 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and other symptoms are improving.
- If you test positive, but have no symptoms, self-isolate for 10 days since you had a positive test.

- If you have had close contact to someone who has tested positive with COVID-19, self-isolate and wait 5-7 days before getting tested. If choosing not to test, self-isolate for 10 days since last exposure. If choosing to test end isolation after day 7 after receiving a negative test result (test must occur on day 5 or later).
- Anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and who meets the following criteria does NOT need to stay home.
- Someone who has been fully vaccinated and shows no symptoms of COVID-19. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even they don't have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

Or

Someone who has COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months and, has recovered and, remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath).

Whether unvaccinated or vaccinated, it is recommended that everyone over the age of 2, wear a mask while indoors and in crowded outdoor areas. Along with mask wearing, other simple preventative measures are recommended including frequent hand washing, avoiding large events, and staying home when you are sick.

SCPHD urges the community to schedule their COVID-19 vaccine appointment through [local providers](#).

More information:

SCPHD is running two hotlines for information about COVID-19: one in Spanish, at (208) 737-5965, and one in English at (208) 737-1138. The hotline is open on business days from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Please refer to <https://phd5.idaho.gov/coronavirus> for daily numbers, guidance, and resources.

A full list of recommendations for critical (red) risk levels can be found in the regional risk level plan at <https://phd5.idaho.gov/coronavirus>.

Please refer to <https://phd5.idaho.gov/COVID-school> for guidance and resources specific to students, parents, and school staff.

Refer to <https://phd5.idaho.gov/coronavirus-dashboard/> for weekly demographic and data. This data is updated weekly on Wednesdays.