



MEDIA RELEASE

San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 16, 2020

New Cases on San Juan Island

Two new positive COVID-19 cases have been reported on San Juan Island. These cases were identified through testing of close contacts of a previous case. All three individuals are self-isolating at home. Total number of cases in San Juan County to date is now 24.

This is a good opportunity to emphasize the following critical information:

1. We all have a responsibility to make thoughtful and careful decisions that protect ourselves, our families, and the most vulnerable in our community. This applies to everyone in the islands: residents, visitors, and workers. We all need to do our part.
2. While investigation of recent cases is ongoing, nearly all of the positive cases to date have resulted from those living in the islands traveling to the mainland and returning to San Juan County, or friends or family of islanders coming to San Juan County.
3. Both nationally and in WA, a surge of cases is being reported, many of which stem from informal social gatherings. See [this article in Seattle Times](#) for one example. Most islanders probably know at least one example of a gathering of this kind happening locally.
4. With summer finally here and COVID fatigue running high, we're all craving normalcy and social interaction. There is a tendency to relax, be less careful, and connect with others in ways we would never have considered a couple of months ago. We need to continue to make sacrifices to ensure future success.
5. Nationally, we're seeing a dramatic rise in the number of cases in the 20-40 year old range. The need to make good decisions applies to all. The risk of younger residents infecting high risk individuals is significant.
6. Being indoors with others is a much higher risk than being outdoors. This can't be emphasized enough. By far the most common form of transmission to date is through close prolonged indoor contact. Passing someone on the street is a very low risk event. Sharing a cup of coffee with them in their home is by far more dangerous.
7. Ensuring that everyone covers their faces when in a public indoor space or when unable to maintain social distancing outside is the most important thing we can do to minimize risk. This applies to residents and visitors alike. We all have a responsibility to model best behavior, educate and encourage when we can, and remember that this crisis is far from over.

Thanks to all for ongoing patience during what is a most exhausting of situations. The cooperative spirit and decency of our islands will see us through, despite the crisis we're in and the polarized nature of our times.