

Continued fishing and hunting depends on social distancing: ODFW staff monitoring fishing locations

April 3, 2020

SALEM, Ore. — Most fishing and hunting seasons remain open in Oregon, but participants should continue to comply with social distancing and other guidelines set forth in the Governor's Stay Home, Save Lives order.

While ODFW does not enforce regulations such as the Governor's Order, a significant number of ODFW staff who work in the field are also monitoring recreational use at many fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing locations in the course of their regular duties. US Coast Guard, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon State Police, Oregon State Sherriffs' Association and other entities are also observing the actions by Oregonians and potentially visitors to Oregon. Adherence to the order while recreating can help prevent more closures.

With good weather and low tides coming up later in spring/summer, ODFW is also stepping up monitoring of clamming on the coast. Staff will be out this weekend to monitor recreational and commercial harvest of razor clams along beaches in Clatsop County to determine the level of harvest and behavior of clammers (e.g. social distancing). Information gathered from this weekend's surveys will help inform decisions about future actions regarding harvest seasons during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We'll continue to monitor fisheries and do everything in our power to be sure it isn't contributing to the transmission of the virus," said Director Curt Melcher. "If we do see anglers, clammers or others are not following the guidelines and endangering themselves and others, then we may need to modify fishing seasons."

ODFW has been working with the Governor's office and other state agencies to address crowding and health concerns related to COVID-19, and encouraging adherence to the Stay Home, Save Lives order. The order does allow for outdoor recreation as long as the guidelines for social distancing are followed.

Just as hiking and biking are allowed, getting outdoors and fishing is a healthy way to get fresh air and exercise during this difficult time provided the guidelines are followed. Governor Brown's Stay Home, Save Lives Executive Order requires that everyone:

Practice social distancing and stay six feet away from anyone who doesn't live in your immediate household, including when outdoors.

Stay close to home rather than travelling far. The Governor's Executive Order says hiking and outdoor activities are OK, but to limit travel.

Stay home if you are sick.

Wash hands frequently.

Carry needed supplies with you to minimize non-essential stops—including buying your license online instead of making a trip to a license sale agent.

While seasons are open, access to many areas are closed. State Parks are closed, national forests have closed established recreation areas and some counties and cities have closed access to boat ramps or other locations. Please check the access restrictions where you are headed before going.

Salmon and steelhead fishing in the Columbia River is also closed, as this fishery is managed concurrently with the state of Washington where all hunting and fishing is closed. Walleye and other fisheries remain open on the Columbia River.

"We thank anglers, hunters, clammers and all people recreating outdoors for following the guidelines," said Melcher. "The outdoors provides an important outlet during this difficult time. We want to keep these seasons open provided they don't contribute to the spread of COVID-19."

Oregon Department of Agriculture

Dear ODA Partner,

Starting today, Oregon's agricultural producers can apply for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) loan called the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The federal program is part of the recently passed CARES Act. It offers loans to help businesses keep their workforce employed during the COVID-19 crisis. We know Oregon's agricultural producers are resilient and proudly independent. But in these uncertain times, they may need support to sustain the essential work of maintaining our critical food and fiber supply. ODA does not administer any part of the CARES Act. This is a notification only. For more information please contact the SBA's Oregon District Office.

U.S. Small Business Administration

Oregon District Office

620 SW Main Street Suite 313

Portland, Oregon

(503) 326-2808

Here is what we know:

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

The new PPP loan is set up to help small businesses, including agriculture operations:

pay employees,

cover mortgage and rent payments, and

cover utility costs.

This loan can be 100% forgivable. Forgiveness is based on the employer maintaining or quickly rehiring employees and maintaining salary levels for eight weeks. We encourage you to apply early, due to the potential for high demand.

How to Apply

You can apply through any existing SBA 7(a) lender or any participating federally insured depository institution, federally insured credit union, or Farm Credit System institution. Contact your local lender to see if they are participating or the SBA's Portland office for guidance.

If you want to start your application, you can download a copy of the PPP borrower application form. This will provide you with the information that lenders need.

Paycheck Protection Program

Loan Terms and Qualifications

Loans will be fully forgiven if the funds are used for:

payroll costs (at least 75% of the amount must have been used for payroll),

interest on mortgages, rent,

and utilities.

Loan payments are also deferred for six months. You do not need collateral or personal guarantees. Neither the government nor lenders will charge small businesses any fees. This loan has a maturity of 2 years and an interest rate of 1%.

This program is for any small business with less than 500 employees affected by coronavirus/COVID-19. This includes agricultural operations. Loan amounts are based on the payroll costs for all employees whose “principal place of residence” is in the U.S. This definition excludes H-2A workers and will likely reduce the loan amount available to some agricultural producers.

What other resources are available to workers and employees?

The CARES Act provided \$34.9 billion to USDA, FDA, and related agencies to provide support for America’s agriculture and rural economy. As more information becomes available, ODA will continue to share that information to help Oregonians respond.

For more information regarding COVID-19: Related Business Layoffs, Closures, and Unemployment Insurance Benefits, please visit the Oregon Employment Department (OED) website. The OED has Scenarios and Benefits documents in both English and Spanish.

Unemployment

The Oregon Employment Department is currently responding to historic levels of claims. If you or your employees need to file for unemployment, you need to file claims quickly. You can file claims with OED in English and Spanish.

Oregon’s agricultural community continues to demonstrate the core values that unite us all in the face of uncertainty and crisis. As we all are experiencing disruptions to daily routines and adjusting to new ways of doing business, the efforts to reduce the virus’ spread and limit pathways of exposure are showing encouraging results that will save lives.

ODA continues to commit to helping and doing our part as the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis is setting in. ODA's COVID-19 website is frequently updated with current information and resources. Staff at the agency continue their work and uphold the promise to support Oregon agriculture.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: RECORD INITIAL CLAIMS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS CONTINUE IN OREGON

News Release from Oregon Employment Department

April 2nd, 2020 10:00 AM

During the week starting March 22, the Oregon Employment Department received 92,700 initial claims for Unemployment Insurance benefits. That represented a 21 percent increase from the previous record during the week starting March 15. By comparison, the agency received 4,900 initial claim filings during the week starting March 8. The Employment Department continues to take proactive steps to meet the unprecedented need for unemployment benefits, which is largely due to reduced hours and layoffs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initial Claims

The Employment Department has detailed information for 45,800 of the claims processed during the week starting March 22. The leisure and hospitality sector, which includes hotels and restaurants, saw the greatest number of initial claims for unemployment benefits (15,500). This reflects impacts of additional public health and safety measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many initial claims also came from workers in health care and social assistance (7,600) and retail trade (4,600).

Multnomah (10,900), Washington (5,300), and Lane (4,200) were the counties with the largest number of claims. The largest percentage increases in initial claims over the week occurred in Harney and Tillamook counties. More initial claims data by industry and area can be found on the QualityInfo.org COVID-19 page (also see tables on next page).

Helping Oregonians

Over the past two weeks the Employment Department doubled the number of staff dedicated to taking claims, and is in the process of tripling it. The agency employees processing claims are doing so at a record rate. We also continue adding secure phone lines to take more calls while also protecting the personal information of those filing claims. Still, the truly unprecedented and sudden level of initial claims has caused delays and frustration for Oregonians who need our help, especially by phone.

The Employment Department encourages anyone who can file an online claim to do so. The agency's website includes a video with step-by-step instructions for filing online claims specific to COVID-19 situations. Filing an initial or weekly claim online helps those who must file their claim by phone. Calls to follow up on the status of successfully filed claims also allows fewer new initial claims, which require the most time and work, to be received by phone. The Employment Department has started sending automatic confirmations for successfully filed claims with an e-mail address provided. Other automatic fixes and guidance, discussed in this video conversation, have been implemented to address common online claim errors and reduce the need for follow-up.

To file an online claim for unemployment benefits, go to Oregon.gov/employ or call 1-877-FILE-4-UI. For help finding jobs and training resources, contact your local WorkSource Oregon center or go to WorkSourceOregon.org.

Equal Opportunity program — auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Contact: (503) 947-1794. For people who are deaf or hard of hearing, call 711 Telecommunications Relay Services.
