



# THE BOARD OF BLAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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## PRESS RELEASE

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## **BLAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PASS ORDINANCE ADDING FURTHER RESTRICTIONS TO THE STATEWIDE SELF-ISOLATION ORDER ISSUED MARCH 25, 2020**

At a special emergency meeting convened today to address issues related to the coronavirus pandemic, Blaine County Commissioners passed Ordinance 2020-01 adding local restrictions to the statewide Self-Isolation Order of March 25, 2020. The goal of the ordinance is to protect public health by reducing the risks of spreading coronavirus. Commissioners also expressed deep concern about the potential for an overwhelmed health care system, if everything is not done to reduce infection rates.

As justification, the ordinance states, “(S)tricter measures are necessary to respond to the imminent threat posed by the spread of the COVID-19 virus within Blaine County. ... (T)hese measures must be enacted on an emergency basis due to the imminent peril posed by the further spread of the COVID-19 virus.”

“We need to take this step,” said Commissioner Dick Fosbury. All three commissioners acknowledged the new measures will impact residents, workers and businesses throughout the county and cause some anxiety and hardships, at least temporarily. “This is invisible. It’s not a flood where you can see the river rising. It’s not a fire where you can see the spread.”

A heavy stream of comments in support and opposition has come in this week to the County and area cities, which are considering the same restrictions. Commissioner Angenie McCleary cast her vote against the ordinance. She felt alternative measures could be promoted and asserted her fears of unintended consequences and that lower-risk businesses will be punished. “The economic impacts also affect health and mental health,” she said. Commissioners agreed to monitor the impacts of the new measures in the coming weeks. They remain in effect at least through April 12, 2020.

All the provisions of the March 25, 2020 Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Order to Self-Isolate remain in effect. If there is a conflict between this local ordinance and the state order, the more stringent requirements of Blaine County’s ordinance apply. The ordinance applies to anyone living, working, or visiting Blaine County.

The additional local restrictions do the following: tighten requirements for social distancing; tighten restrictions on non-essential travel outside the county; require out-of-state visitors to self-quarantine; deem residential and commercial construction non-essential; deem landscaping and routine building maintenance and repair non-essential; say transportation services like taxis may only serve essential functions; and, say hotel rooms and short-term rentals may not go to non-residents unless they are self-isolating, a health care worker or performing essential government functions.

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