

Public Health Madison and Dane County: Dane County sees record disease spread, several citations issued over weekend

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Dane County is currently averaging over 300 cases per day. A record-breaking 142 people are hospitalized with COVID-19 in Dane County, including 35 in the ICU.

Public Health Madison & Dane County continues to hear that people who have tested positive have been socializing with friends and family members, in both small and large groups.

“People seem to make exceptions around friends and family, but this disease is tricky—you could feel fine and spread it to others. Unfortunately, the person you spread it to might not be so lucky. With the unprecedented level of disease in our community, it is more important now than ever to limit contact with others,” said Janel Heinrich, Director of Public Health Madison & Dane County. “Gatherings both large and small pose a risk.”

According to [one risk assessment tool](#), gatherings as small as 10 people currently have an estimated 29% chance of having someone with COVID-19. For a gathering of 20, it's 50%.

In addition to limiting contact with people outside your household, [current public health orders](#) limit gatherings to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors. All

individuals must wear face coverings and maintain physical distancing.

At least 13 campus area residences were in violation of public health orders over the Halloween weekend. Public Health Madison & Dane County is working with UW-Madison, the City of Madison Attorney's Office, and the Madison Police Department to deliver summons and complaints that could involve large fines and university disciplinary action as a result of gatherings.

"COVID-19 continues to be an issue in our community, and hosting parties is contributing to the spread of the virus. We will be moving forward with prosecution actions for as many gatherings as we can in order to drive home how important it is to follow public health orders," said Marci Paulsen from the City of Madison's Attorney's Office.

The City may issue a fine of up to \$1,000 for every violation of the health order. This means that anyone violating the maximum gathering limit of 10 people indoors will see significant penalties. This weekend, the minimum number of violations observed was three, which means the hosts may be fined \$3,000. One gathering over the weekend had 91 people present in an apartment.

Additionally, UW-Madison students who hosted parties may receive an emergency suspension or other disciplinary action from the UW-Madison Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Students who were uncooperative with compliance checks may see greater consequences.

To report a public health concern to UW-Madison, fill out [this form](#).

"We are also grateful for the support of UW-Madison and MPD as we move forward on consequences for order violations. We are looking forward to continuing to work together in order to follow up on non-compliance next weekend and throughout the coming months. We all hope to see less egregious violations in the future," said Paulsen.

"While large parties have the potential to be super-spreader events, gatherings that

are smaller are also responsible for extending the duration of this pandemic. Virtually connecting with friends and family members you don't live with is the safest and best option," said Heinrich.

[Read more recommendations](#) on the Public Health Madison & Dane County website.