



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO

COVID-19 Update: Labor Day Precautions, New Traffic Safety Efforts, Broadband Connectivity

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(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted today provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LABOR DAY PRECAUTIONS

In advance of the upcoming Labor Day holiday, Governor DeWine today reminded citizens to take safety precautions when celebrating with others outside of their households.

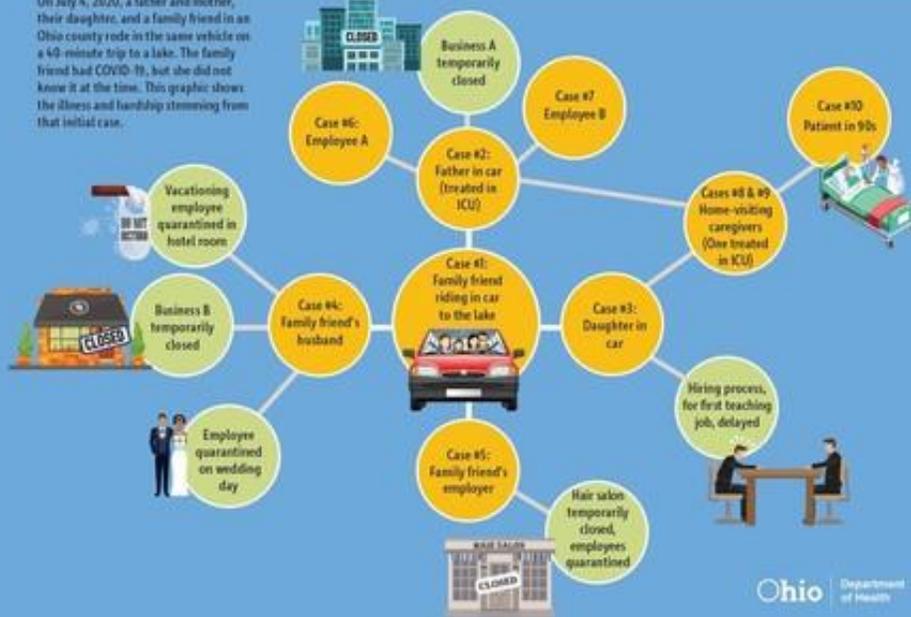
"Today Ohio reported its highest number of new cases since the end of July, which is a stark reminder that this virus has not gone away and it continues to spread in our communities," said Governor DeWine. "As you consider gathering with family and friends this weekend, please remember that COVID-19 still represents a significant risk to the lives and livelihoods of citizens in Ohio."

Governor DeWine encourages citizens to continue regular hand washing, social distancing, and disinfecting. The mask mandate in Ohio remains in effect for all 88 counties.

In the weeks following the Fourth of July, Ohio began to see a significant increase in cases caused, in part, by holiday gatherings. The graphic below demonstrates one example of COVID-19 spread from an Independence Day gathering.

COVID-19 Community Spread

On July 4, 2020, a father and mother, their daughter, and a family friend in an Ohio county rode in the same vehicle on a 40-minute trip to a lake. The family friend had COVID-19, but she did not know it at the time. This graphic shows the illness and hardship stemming from that initial case.



ADDED TRAFFIC-SAFETY EFFORTS

Governor DeWine announced three new traffic-safety efforts aimed at reducing the number of fatalities on Ohio's roads and better ensuring that Ohio's young drivers have the necessary skills to safely navigate the streets.

- **Ohio Traffic Safety Council:** The new council, led by the Ohio Department of Public Safety, will be composed of representatives of several state agencies and outside groups. The role of the council will be to coordinate and monitor all statewide traffic safety initiatives, analyze trends, and advise the Governor on creating safer roads through education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency response.
- **Work Zone Enforcement:** Because enforcing traffic laws can be a challenge in work zones, the Ohio State Highway Patrol Aviation Unit, which already conducts speed checks from the air, will conduct targeted enforcement on crash-causing violations in Ohio Department of Transportation construction zones. The increased enforcement is in response to the nearly 9,000 work-zone crashes in Ohio between 2019 and 2020.
- **Juvenile Court Grants:** Eight juvenile courts in Ohio have been awarded grant funding through the Ohio Department of Public Safety to help them provide young drivers more access to advanced driver training. Courts in Adams, Athens, Medina, Knox, Delaware, Miami, Fairfield, and Delaware counties will each receive \$20,000 through Ohio's new Youthful Driver Safety Fund which was developed as part of Ohio's biennium budget.

The new traffic safety efforts are in addition to several other initiatives launched by Governor DeWine since 2019 including the creation of the Intersection Safety Program to improve the safety of 150 rural, urban, and suburban intersections across the state; the development of the ["Ohio - Ready, Test, Drive!"](#) program to help enhance the skills of new drivers; and the creation of several distracted driving corridors to reduce distracted driving in Ohio. Governor DeWine also worked with members of the General Assembly to introduce the [Hands-Free Ohio](#) bill, which is currently pending in the Ohio General Assembly, to strengthen Ohio's laws related to the use of wireless devices while driving.

Governor DeWine today also encouraged Ohio's drivers to watch their speeds after Ohio recorded 154 traffic fatalities in July - the highest number of traffic fatalities in one month since 2007. According to the Ohio State Highway Patrol, one in three of those killed in July was involved in a speed-related crash.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer people are traveling on Ohio's roads which is leading many of those who are driving to speed. This year, the Patrol has issued more than 2,200 citations for speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour. This represents a 60 percent increase in these citations over the same time period last year.

BROADBAND EXPANSION EFFORTS

Lt. Governor Husted announced that over 900 grant requests have been approved for the K-12 Broadband Connectivity Grant to go towards hotspots and internet-enabled devices. This enables 121,000 students to gain high-speed internet in their homes, thanks to the devices provided by this grant based on information provided by the schools. In areas where there are barriers to take-home devices, the grant will also support the creation of new public wi-fi and mobile wi-fi spaces to help students connect to the internet. There are over 645,000 students in schools that are increasing their public wi-fi or using mobile wi-fi. Those students will have a place to go to access the internet if they do not have access in their homes.

By the end of this week, schools will receive notifications of their final award and can begin the process of purchasing these items through the Ohio Department of Education and BroadbandOhio.

The Lt. Governor also provided an update on Ohio's telehealth pilot project at Switzerland of Ohio School District in Monroe County. The objective is to connect the school district with behavioral health services. Districts interested in developing telehealth services can now review the Telehealth in Schools Blueprint, which provides a better understanding of lessons learned through the pilot project.

The Blueprint can be found here: innovate.ohio.gov/broadband.

Progress has also been made through Ohio's Common Sense Initiative (CSI) to streamline broadband regulations through their new Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool.

The tool found:

- 303 definitions related to the regulation of broadband, found in Ohio's rules or statutes across 25 different state agencies
- 16 different definitions of public utility in Ohio law across 5 different agencies

In an effort to develop a strategy that will create a clear and concise set of terminology for broadband providers to follow, the Lt. Governor and CSI will work with agencies to streamline these definitions.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Lt. Governor Husted also unveiled a new public service announcement to encourage Ohioans to wear masks. The PSA features 99-year-old Jim "Pee Wee" Martin who lives in Sugarcreek Township in Greene County.

Jim volunteered to be a WWII Paratrooper, an original member of Company "G", 3rd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. His nickname "Pee Wee" was earned because he was 106 pounds, the smallest and lightest guy in the company. In 1944, Jim jumped into France over Utah Beach the night prior to D-Day and fought for 33 days in the Normandy campaign. He also fought in Holland, Belgium, and Germany.

Among his many awards, Jim earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his great work.

"Wearing a mask to protect Jim "Pee Wee" Martin seems like a small sacrifice for us to protect people like him, considering all he did to protect us," said Lt. Governor Husted.

The PSA can be viewed below.



