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## Oregon News

### [‘Lawless city?’ Worry after Portland police don’t stop chaos](#)

*Associated Press*

A crowd of 100 people wreaked havoc in downtown Portland, Oregon, this week – smashing storefront windows, lighting dumpsters on fire and causing at least \$500,000 in damage – but police officers didn’t stop them.

Portland Police Bureau officials say that’s because of legislation passed by Oregon lawmakers this year, which restricts the tools they can use to confront people vandalizing buildings and causing mayhem.

“The reason that we did not intervene goes back to what we talked about last month with House Bill 2928 and the restrictions placed on us in a crowd control environment,” KOIN reports that Portland Police Lt. Jake Jensen said in a neighborhood meeting Thursday. Residents frustrated by the latest round of destructive demonstrations Tuesday questioned whether that meant anything goes now in Portland.

The legislation in question is House Bill 2928, which prohibits the use of things like pepper spray and rubber bullets for crowd control. However there is an exception – when the circumstances constitute a riot and if the officer using the chemical incapacitant reasonably believes its use is necessary to stop and prevent more destructive behavior.

“The law clearly allows Portland Police to use effective tools necessary to control violent crowds,” House Minority Leader Christine Drazan told The Associated Press on Friday. “However, activist attorneys are deliberately misinterpreting legislation to prevent police from intervening. They have no business putting law enforcement and community safety at risk.”

Portland Police Sgt. Kevin Allen told AP that officers have been made aware of the “potential implications” of the legislation and that it’s being analyzed by the city attorney’s office.

“Until we have some clarity on the bill we have to follow the most restrictive interpretation of it,” Allen said.

Mayor Ted Wheeler’s office didn’t respond to multiple requests for comment on Friday. Neither did lawmakers of the Democratic legislative caucuses of the Legislature, which is controlled by the Democratic Party.

### [Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek Calls for Special Session to Protect Tenants](#)

*Willamette Week*

House Speaker Tina Kotek on Oct. 15 called for a special session of the Oregon Legislature to stave off a rash of evictions as pandemic restrictions expire.

“Nothing is more important than keeping people housed,” Kotek wrote on Twitter. “The pandemic and the coming winter demand action now.”

WW reported two weeks ago that 11,900 renters statewide who’ve applied for pandemic assistance were on the cusp of losing legal protection from eviction because it had taken too long for the state to get relief money to their landlords.

When The Oregonian reported Friday that the protections for those renters had expired, Kotek responded to the story with the tweet. “We need a special session for legislators to fix this problem,” she wrote.

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It's not clear whether Kotek would have the votes to pass such a bill, nor is it clear that Gov. Kate Brown will call for a special session. Brown has previously told WW she will rely on landlord self-interest to wait for state assistance rather than kick tenants out and get nothing. If tenants are evicted before assistance arrives, the application does not proceed, Brown's office said last month.

### [Oregon rental help improving, but patience wearing thin](#)

*KOIN*

More of the people who applied for Oregon's rental assistance program are finally getting their money but the majority of people are still waiting.

At the end of September, just 19% of households who applied through Oregon's Emergency Rental Assistance Program had been paid. That number is now up to 31%.

Anna Zamarripa with Capital Property Management. said they've started receiving payments for more of their tenants. But, she said, a lot of the payments have been for people who applied last month. Applications for her tenants who applied in May are still in the queue.

"I want these residents to stay safe in their homes. I don't want to sit on the phone with another crying resident not knowing what they're going to do," Zamarripa told KOIN 6 News. "I don't want to find another abandoned apartment and not know and to find out that rent assistance was just around the corner."

Officials with Oregon Housing and Community Services have not yet responded about how applications are being prioritized. However, KOIN 6 News was told the outside vendor they hired to help get through the applications is making a difference.

### [Portland passes 'grim milestone' of 1,000 shootings in 2021](#)

*KATU*

Portland Police Chief Chuck Lovell shared a grim milestone on Saturday: since the beginning of the year, there have been more than 1,000 shootings in the city.

The chief addressed this statistic in statements made on Twitter, calling Portland's gun violence "a terrible problem." He said these shootings are traumatic for the entire community.

This is a substantial jump compared to years past. KATU News did some digging to compare these numbers to previous years.

According to Portland Police Bureau shooting statistics: by this time last year, there were more than 600 recorded shootings, and by this time in 2019, there were around 300.

In all of 2019, there were more than 380 shootings.

In 2020, that number jumped to nearly 900 shootings for the year.

### [Oregon 'herd immunity' against COVID-19 delta variant should arrive in late December, OHSU forecasts](#)

*The Oregonian*

The worst could be over in the next two months – at least for the delta variant.

The strain on Oregon hospitals caused by the highly transmissible COVID-19 variant has already started to ease, according to data provided by the Oregon Health Authority. And a new forecast from Oregon Health & Science University concludes that the drop-off in hospitalizations will continue.

Because the variant now has fewer and fewer willing hosts in the state, another surge that

because the variant now has fewer and fewer winning hosts in the state, another surge that would stretch hospitals to their limits probably isn't in the cards.

"It's going to be increasingly difficult to generate a new surge in hospitalizations," said Peter Graven, an OHSU researcher who has been modeling expected coronavirus hospitalization numbers on a weekly basis since the beginning of the pandemic.

This positive outlook comes from crunching the numbers on Oregon's vaccination rate (about 71% of the adult population) and the spread of the disease so far among the unvaccinated, as well as considering the impact of federal vaccine mandates and Oregon's vaccine mandate for certain workers, which kicks in Monday.

OHSU says "about 22% of Oregonians are still vulnerable to infection" from the delta variant. The effects of herd immunity for the delta variant are likely to take hold when about 85% of the population carries immunity from vaccination or recent infection, and that's within sight in Oregon, Graven said. He forecasts that Oregon will reach that point around Dec. 26, although he anticipates there will be another 177,000 infections in Oregon before then.

While Oregon COVID-19 cases have been trending down overall since early September, a significant number of the state's intensive-care beds are still being taken up by coronavirus patients. This is especially the case in the eastern part of Oregon, where it's still more than 40%.

#### [Oregon, Wash. vaccine deadline for state and health care workers on Monday, Oct. 18](#)

*KATU*

Oregon's COVID-19 vaccine mandate goes into effect Monday, Oct. 18 for some state workers, health care workers and teachers.

A similar mandate goes into effect Monday in Washington, where state employees and healthcare workers who are not fully vaccinated against coronavirus also risk losing their job.

Workers in both states could also have applied for exemptions for medical reasons or religious beliefs.

#### [With legal challenges in limbo, Oregon's vaccine mandate takes effect](#)

*OPB*

As Gov. Kate Brown's vaccine mandate for hundreds of thousands of state employees, health care workers and teachers begins to take effect, several early legal challenges seeking to block the statewide directive have failed to sway judges.

A pair of rulings earlier this month by Oregon courts rejected calls to block the mandate. In both cases, workers claimed their rights were being violated — meaning state workers who don't get vaccinated will be placed on administrative leave, forced to work remotely in instances that allow for it, or simply let go from their positions.

But the legal fight isn't over.

Experts say that lawsuits against vaccine mandates and rulings in other states such as Maine and New York provide a glimpse into what could be the future of challenges here in Oregon as appeals nationwide get closer to reaching the U.S. Supreme Court.

That could see Oregon plaintiffs shifting their focus to the question of religious exemptions.

#### [Oregon COVID-19 vaccine deadline: Schools, hospitals, state prepare to begin losing staff](#)

*Statesman Journal*

The deadline has arrived for Oregon executive branch employees and staff in health care and school settings to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or face occupational

and school settings to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or face occupational ramifications under Gov. Kate Brown's executive order.

Hospitals in the Salem area have reported the majority of their staffs are vaccinated against the coronavirus — including an overwhelming majority of health care providers. School districts in the Willamette Valley also are reporting that most of their employees are now fully vaccinated.

However, both hospitals and schools have struggled to maintain staffing levels as workers faced increased stress and health concerns during the pandemic. Unvaccinated workers will be put on unpaid leave, and there are fears that even a small loss in staffing will impact some services.

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