



COUNTY OF MONTEREY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Administration
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Emergency Medical Services
Environmental Health/Animal Services

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Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about the April 28, 2020 Monterey County Health Officer Order Requiring Members of the Public and Workers to Wear Face Coverings.

Q. If I don't cover my face can I be fined?

A. Yes, you could be fined if you fail to cover your face as required by this Order. That is why it is important to carefully read the order and understand when you need to cover your face.

Q. Do I still need to shelter in place if I cover my face?

A. Yes, you must still shelter in place. The Health Officer Shelter in Place order still requires you to remain at home and only leave your home to provide essential services or to receive essential services.

Q. Why aren't procedure or surgical masks recommended under this order?

A. Cloth coverings as recommended in this order can prevent the spread of droplets from someone who is infectious. Since there is still a shortage of surgical or procedure masks in the United States, these masks should be reserved for health care facilities.

Q. How does a face covering prevent the spread of COVID-19?

A. One key method of transmission of the COVID-19 virus is by respiratory droplets that people expel when they breathe, cough or sneeze. People infected with the virus may not have any symptoms, meaning they are asymptomatic, but they can still be contagious. People infected with the virus are contagious 48 hours before developing symptoms, the time when they are pre-symptomatic. Therefore, the CDC, CDPH, and MCHD now believe that wearing a

face covering, when combined with physical distancing of at least 6 feet and frequent hand washing, may reduce the risk of transmitting coronavirus when in public and engaged in essential activities by reducing the spread of respiratory droplets.

Q. If I cover my face when I leave my residence, do I still need to practice social distancing?

A. Yes. Wearing a face covering is one tool for reducing the spread of the virus. However, doing so is not a substitute for physical distancing of at least 6 feet, and frequent hand washing.

Q. Under what authority can the County Health Officer issue this order?

A. California Health and Safety Code sections 101040 and 120175 give the County Health Officer the authority to issue this order to protect public health.

Q. When does this Order take effect?

A. This order takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on April 30, 2020.

Q. When does this Order end?

A. The Order does not have an end date. The Order may be terminated or amended in the future by the County Health Officer.

Q. Since the Order was issued by the County Health Officer, does it also apply to cities in the County?

A. Yes. The County Health Officer has the authority to issue Orders for the unincorporated county and all cities in the county.

Q. What exactly is considered a Face Covering?

A. As used in this Order, a "Face Covering" means a covering made of cloth, fabric, or other soft or permeable material, without holes, that covers only the nose and mouth and surrounding areas of the lower face. A covering that hides or obscures the wearer's eyes or forehead is not a Face Covering.

Q. What are some examples of Face Coverings?

A. Examples of Face Coverings include a scarf or bandana; a neck gaiter; a homemade covering made from a T-shirt, sweatshirt, or towel, held on with rubber bands or otherwise; or a mask, which need not be medical-grade. A Face Covering may be factory-made, or may be handmade and improvised from ordinary household materials. The Face Covering should be comfortable, so that the wearer can breathe comfortably through the nose and does not need to adjust it frequently, so as to avoid touching the face.

Q. Should I use a surgical or procedure mask to cover my face, like the masks I see at health care facilities?

A. For as long as medical grade masks such as N95 masks and surgical masks are in short supply, members of the public should not purchase those masks as Face Coverings under this Order. Medical grade masks should be reserved for health care providers and first responders. In general, even when not required by this Order, people are strongly encouraged to wear Face Coverings when in public.

Q. Can I clean my face covering and reuse it?

A. Yes, if your face covering is made of cloth and is not a disposable mask. Clean your Face Coverings frequently and have extra ones available so that they have a clean one available for use. Many Face Coverings can be washed at home.

Q. I have a mask that has a valve on it. Can I use that?

A. No. Any mask that has a one-way valve, which looks like a raised plastic cylinder about the size of a quarter on the front or side of the mask, is designed to make exhaling easier and allows droplets from the person wearing them to escape and enter the air. Use of masks with valves does not protect other from exposure to droplets that could contain the virus.

Q. How do I make a Face Covering?

A. Demonstrations of how to make a Face Covering and additional information about how to wear and clean Face Coverings may be found at the website of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html.

Q. When must the general public wear a Face Covering?

A. All members of the public, except as specifically exempted below, must wear a Face Covering outside their home or other place where they reside in the following situations:

- a) When inside of, or in line to enter, or when conducting business through a car window or walk-up counter at any Essential Business. Essential Businesses are defined in section 13.f of the April 3, 2020 Order. Examples include grocery stores, convenience stores, supermarkets, laundromats and restaurants;
- b) When inside or at any location or facility engaging in Minimum Basic Operations, or inside of any location or facility while seeking or receiving Essential Government Functions. Minimum Basic Operations and Essential Government Functions are defined in Sections 13.g and 13.d, respectively, of the April 3rd Order;
- c) When engaged in Essential Infrastructure work, which is defined in Section 13.c of the April 3rd Order);
- d) When obtaining services at Healthcare Operations, which are defined in Section 13.b of the April 3rd Order, including hospitals, clinics, COVID-19 testing locations, dentists, pharmacies, blood banks and blood drives, other healthcare facilities, mental health providers, or facilities providing veterinary care and similar health care services for animals, unless directed otherwise by an employee or worker at the Healthcare Operation; or

- e) When a person is waiting for or riding on public transportation such as a bus, train or paratransit, or when a person is in a taxi, private car service, or ride-sharing vehicle.

Q. Do public transportation operators and car service drivers need to cover their faces?

A. Yes, they do. Each driver or operator of any public transportation vehicle, paratransit vehicle, taxi, private car service or ride-sharing vehicle must wear a Face Covering while driving or operating such vehicle, regardless of whether a member of the public is in the vehicle. This is because drivers need to reduce the spread of their respiratory droplets in the vehicle at all times so the riders are not exposed to the driver's respiratory droplets.

Q. Are employers required to make their employees cover their faces?

A. Yes, all Essential Businesses, as well as entities and organizations with workers engaged in Essential Infrastructure work, Minimum Basic Operations, or Essential Government Functions (except for Healthcare Operations, which are subject to their own regulation regarding specified Face Coverings), must require their employees, contractors, owners, and volunteers to wear a Face Covering at the workplace and when performing work off-site any time the employee, contractor, owner, or volunteer is:

- i. interacting in person with any member of the public;
- ii. working in any space visited by members of the public, such as, by way of example and without limitation, reception areas, grocery store or pharmacy aisles, service counters, public restrooms, cashier and checkout areas, waiting rooms, service areas, and other spaces used to interact with the public, regardless of whether anyone from the public is present at the time;
- iii. working in any space where food is prepared or packaged for sale or distribution to others;

- iv. working in or walking through common areas such as hallways, stairways, elevators, and parking facilities; or
- v. in any room or enclosed area when other people (except for members of the person's own household or residence) are present.

Q. Are there some employees that do not need to cover their face?

A. Yes, but only under certain circumstances. A Face Covering is not required when a person is in a personal office (a single room) when others outside of that person's household are not present as long as the public does not regularly visit the room. By way of example and without limitation, a construction worker, plumber, bank manager, accountant, or bike repair person, who is otherwise allowed to engage in work pursuant to the April 3rd Order, is not required to wear a Face Covering if that individual is alone and in a space not regularly visited by the public, but that individual must put on a Face Covering when coworkers are nearby, when being visited by a client/customer, and anywhere members of the public or other coworkers are regularly present.

Q. What actions are employers required to take to encourage customers to wear a face covering?

A. Yes, employers must take reasonable measures, such as posting signs, to remind their customers and the public of the requirement that they wear a Face Covering while inside of or waiting in line to enter the business, facility, or location.

Q. If I don't cover my face at a business, could the business refuse to serve me?

A. Yes, Essential Businesses and entities or organizations that are engaged in Essential Infrastructure work or Minimum Basic Operations must take all reasonable steps to prohibit any member of the public who is not wearing a Face Covering from entering and must not serve that person.

Q. Do infants and toddlers need to wear Face Coverings?

A. The Order states that any child aged two years or less should not wear a Face Covering because of the risk of suffocation.

Q. Do children need to wear Face Coverings?

A. This Order does not require that any child twelve years of age or less wear a Face Covering, including but not limited to, when attending childcare activities. However, parents and caregivers should supervise the use of Face Coverings by children to avoid misuse.

Q. Should people who walk, run and cycle cover their faces?

A. Wearing a Face Covering is recommended but not required while engaged in outdoor recreation such as walking, hiking, bicycling, or running. But each person engaged in such activity must comply with social distancing requirements including maintaining at least six feet of separation from all other people to the greatest extent possible.

Additionally, it is recommended that each person engaged in such activity bring a Face Covering and wear that Face Covering in circumstances where it is difficult to maintain compliance with social distancing requirements, and that they carry the Face Covering in a readily accessible location, such as around the person's neck or in a pocket, for such use.

Running or bicycling causes people to more forcefully expel airborne particles, which makes the usual minimum 6 feet distance requirement less adequate. Therefore, runners and cyclists must take extra measures to avoid exposing others to airborne particles, including wearing a Face Covering when possible, maintaining physical distance of greater than 6 feet when engaging in these activities, avoiding spitting, and avoiding running or cycling directly in front of or behind another runner or cyclist who is not in the same household.

Q. Are there any situations where a person does not need to cover their face?

A. Yes, under certain circumstance. This Order does not require any person to wear a Face Covering while driving alone, or exclusively with other members of the same family or household, in a motor vehicle.

The Order also does not apply to an individual if the person can show either:

1) a medical professional has advised that wearing a Face Covering may pose a risk to the person wearing the mask for health-related reasons; or

2) wearing a Face Covering would create a risk to the person related to their work as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.

Also, a Face Covering should not be worn by anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the Face Covering without assistance.

Q. Is this Order enforceable and if so, by whom?

A. State law allows the Sheriff and Chiefs of police to enforce this Order

Q. Where can I get a copy of the Order?

A. You can find the order at the County Health Department website at www.mtyhd.org.

Q. If I still have questions, who can I call?

A. You can call the Monterey County Health Department at (831) 755-4521.