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Public Health
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Napa County Health Officer Requirements for Wearing Face Coverings

Updated: May 29, 2020

(Updated in Red)

The Napa County Health Officer amended the Napa County Shelter At Home Order on May 7, 2020. The order now requires the public to wear cloth face coverings when in public in certain situations. This is now required to prevent asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19 from the wearer of the cloth face mask to others.

Specifically, cloth face coverings are required when:

- Inside places of business. This includes, but is not limited to, all indoor retail businesses like grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, medical facilities, etc.
- In workplaces **and** office spaces when interacting with any person and 6 feet of physical distancing cannot be accomplished.
- **In public buildings (libraries, government buildings, etc.)**

Why Cloth Face Coverings?

We know that people may be infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) but have no symptoms (“asymptomatic”). Wearing a face covering can help reduce the chance that those with asymptomatic infections will spread the infection to others. If everyone wears face coverings in public, we can reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

The Role of Face Coverings

Information about the spread of COVID-19 by people who are not showing symptoms demonstrates the need for cloth face coverings, which, when combined with physical distancing and hand washing, may prevent the spread of the virus to others when going outside for essential activities. Cloth face coverings must cover the nose and mouth.

Covering your face is about helping others. By covering your face when you go out for essential reasons, you are protecting others, including vulnerable community members.

Face Coverings and the Order to Shelter at Home

Covering your face does not change the Shelter at Home Order, which requires people to stay home as much as possible and maintain social/physical distancing. Sheltering at home has slowed the spread of the virus in our community, saving lives. Strictly following the order to shelter at home remains critical and is enforceable.

Face Coverings and Social Distancing

Wearing a face covering does not mean that people can come in closer contact with one another. Social distancing must be maintained even when wearing a face covering.

When a Face Covering is Not Needed

Face coverings are not required when:

- At home.
- In your car alone or solely with members of your household.
- Exercising outdoors, like walking, hiking, bicycling, or running, provided you are staying at least six feet apart from anyone who is not a member of your household. However, people are recommended to have a face covering with them and readily accessible when exercising, even if they're not wearing it at that moment.
- When eating or drinking.

Who Should Not Wear a Face Covering

Face coverings are not necessarily recommended for:

- Children 6 years old or younger.
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to easily remove a face covering without assistance.
- Anyone who has been advised by a medical professional not to wear a face covering.
- Children under 2 years old should not wear a face covering to avoid the risk of suffocation.

Face Covering Information for Businesses and Transportation

- Essential businesses must require their employees wear a face covering in any area where others may be present, even if there are no customers or members of the public present at the time. This is to avoid spreading respiratory droplets onto surfaces in areas where others may be exposed at some point.
- Essential businesses should inform customers about the requirement of wearing a face covering, including posting signs at the entrance to the store or facility.
- All workers operating public transportation, or operating other types of shared transportation are required to wear a face covering when at work in most settings.
- Workers doing minimum basic operations, like security or payroll, essential infrastructure work, or government functions should wear a face covering when six feet of physical distance cannot be maintained.

Making Your Own Face Covering

There are several options for face coverings, as long as they cover the nose and mouth. Face coverings can be made of a variety of cloth materials, such as bandanas, scarves, t-shirts, sweatshirts, towels, or other soft or permeable material, but there should not be holes around the nose or mouth.

The CDC has [provided simple instructions on how to make your own face covering.](#)

Cleaning Your Face Covering

Face coverings should be washed frequently. Ideally, wash them after each use and have a dedicated laundry bag or bin. Always wash your hands, or use hand sanitizer, before and after touching your face or face coverings.

The CDC also [has easy instruction on how to wear and clean your face covering.](#)

Save Masks for Health Care Workers

N-95 and surgical masks are in short supply and need to be conserved for health workers on the frontlines. We are managing our supply levels closely so that health workers and first responders have medical-grade personal protective equipment that is aligned with the latest evidence-based science and appropriate for their work duties.

If you are currently using a medical mask, keep using it as long as possible – until it becomes dirty or damaged – due to the limited supply.