

## Public Health Order 20-008 Requiring Face Coverings Frequently Asked Questions July 27, 2020

### About the Order

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#### What does this order mean?

It means that when you are outdoors in Jefferson County, you must wear a face covering if social distancing (6 ft.) cannot be maintained from people outside your household. When you are indoors, except when you are in a private residence, you must wear a face covering if you are entering or moving within a public indoor space or while waiting to use or using a taxi, bus, light rail, train, car service or ride-sharing service.

Public spaces where individuals are required to wear a face covering include but are not limited to:

- County and municipal buildings
- Places of worship
- Grocery stores
- Shopping malls
- Restaurants, except when seated at a table to eat or drink
- Hair and nails salons
- Schools
- Retail shops such as Lowes, Home Depot, Walgreens, Target, Walmart, etc.
- Most group activities where a 6 ft. distance cannot be maintained from people outside your household while outdoors, or group activities held indoors outside of a private residence

#### What is the difference between the statewide mandatory mask order and Jefferson County Public Health's (JCPH) order requiring facial coverings?

- The statewide order requires masks indoors whereas JCPH requires wearing a mask or face covering both indoors and outdoors. The outdoor requirement is only in situations where a distance of six (6) feet from individuals who are not members of their household cannot consistently be maintained.
- The statewide mask order went into effect at midnight on July 16, 2020, and is in effect for 30 days. The executive order may be extended. JCPH's order went into effect July 24 at midnight until further notice.

#### Is the mask order a law?

Yes, executive orders and public health orders have the force of law. People who do not comply with the executive order may be subject to civil or criminal penalties.

#### Should children wear a face covering/mask?

- Children who are 11 years old and over must wear a face covering.
- People who cannot medically tolerate a face covering are not required to wear a face covering.
- Children ages 2 and under should NOT wear masks or cloth face coverings.

### **Am I still required to wear a face covering/mask if I have a medical condition?**

People who cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition are not required to wear one, such as a person who has trouble breathing or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face-covering without assistance, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Read more from the CDC about other reasons face coverings may not be possible in every situation or for some people.

Some people with hearing impairments may use lip-reading to understand others. While PHO 20-008 provides an exemption to allow communication with those individuals who are hearing impaired, the University of Colorado's Center for Inclusive Design and Excellence created DIY clear mask designs, which support lipreading visibility. [Download instructions here](#). While not required, we strongly encourage any individuals in the deaf and hearing-impaired community to consider using a clear mask design such as the University of Colorado's design.

Please also be aware that if you cannot medically tolerate a mask, you should consider limiting any visits to businesses to protect yourself and others. If you need help getting groceries or other necessities, you can call 211 to be connected to local resources that may be able to help you.

### **Do I need any documentation if I am exempt from the order?**

No. However, if you cannot wear a face covering at work where one would otherwise be required, your employer may request documentation from you.

### **Will this order apply to schools?**

Yes, this order currently applies to schools. However, JCPH will work with Jeffco Public Schools and private schools in Jefferson County as needed to further refine when masks will be required at school.

### **Do I need to wear a mask while exercising at an indoor gym?**

Yes, mask-wearing requirements apply to everyone indoors, including people exercising. If you are in an indoor room with other patrons who are not a part of your household, then you need to wear a mask. You may remove it temporarily if you need to catch your breath or safely perform an activity, but wear a mask as much as feasible.

### **What about indoor sports?**

Yes, masks should be worn while playing indoor sports unless it interferes with the activity. You may remove the mask temporarily to catch your breath if needed, or if you can't wear appropriate safety equipment while wearing the mask. Wear a mask as much as feasible.

### **Do I have to wear a face covering when exercising outdoors or participating in a sports activity?**

Individuals are exempt from wearing a face covering while exercising or engaging in a sports activity outdoors where the face covering would impair their ability to engage in the activity. Otherwise, you must wear a face covering if you cannot maintain social distancing (6 ft.) with people outside of your household. You must also wear a face covering in public spaces when going to and from exercising or participating in sports, such as when outside of a game, or going to and from the game location if you cannot maintain a distance of 6 ft. from others outside of your household.

### **How is the order enforced?**

We are relying on the community to do the right thing and wear face coverings to protect one another. The purpose of mandating the use of face coverings is to help stem the rise of new cases in Jeffco. This is to help protect the health of our residents, and to help ensure businesses that have recently reopened or expanded their ability to provide services will not need to once again shut down or curtail their operations. Although education is our first choice, in cases of flagrant violations, JCPH can take action through a civil or criminal proceeding if necessary to enforce the order.

## **Businesses**

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### **If I don't wear a face covering, can a business turn me away?**

Yes. Businesses must require non-medical mask wearing by the general public. However, some people may be subject to an exemption (whether visible or not) that prevents them from wearing a face covering. Although a business is not required to allow a person without a face covering to enter its facility, it should make a reasonable accommodation for people who qualify for a medical exemption, such as by offering curbside delivery. For more information, refer to the [Guidance to Employers and Places of Public Accommodation Regarding Equal Opportunity Employment and Reasonable Accommodations Due to the Presence of COVID-19](#).

### **Can businesses still choose to turn someone away for not wearing a mask, even if they have a medical condition?**

Yes. However, if a person claims that they are unable to use a mask, a business must make reasonable efforts to accommodate the customer in a different way. The business does not have to allow a person without a mask to enter its facility because that could involve requiring staff to take unsafe risks. Some examples of accommodations or modifications might include:

- Telephone or video chat services
- Curbside delivery
- Allowing a substitute person to pick up an item with proper permission. This may include taking a credit or debit card number by phone and then allowing someone else to pick up the item with a special code
- When possible and in some unique situations, delivering the good to the person outside of curbside delivery

CDC recommends that businesses post a sign outside that says, "Masks Required" and also provides a phone number and email address for someone to contact should they be unable to use a mask. Doing this may reduce the need for an employee to have to debate the situation with an un-masked person.

### **Is there guidance available regarding ADA compliance?**

Yes. If someone is unable to wear a mask due to a medical exemption, we encourage businesses to work with those exempted individuals to create alternative accommodations such as curbside pickup or delivery. For more information, refer to the [Guidance to Employers and Places of Public Accommodation Regarding Equal Opportunity Employment and Reasonable Accommodations Due to the Presence of COVID-19](#).

### **Are there signs businesses are required to post at each entrance?**

Yes. Businesses must post on all entrances a sign which states that, pursuant to Executive Order D 220-138 and Jefferson County Public Health Order 20-008, no individual may enter the facility without wearing a face covering unless a specific exception applies.

JCPH has provided a PDF copy of the sign in English and Spanish for businesses to print out and post on their entrances.

### **What should business owners or employees do if customers refuse to wear a mask?**

Businesses should refuse service to individuals not wearing masks (unless the individual is exempt due to a medical condition or other reason permitted in the order). If a patron becomes combative or refuses to leave, contact local law enforcement.

## **About Face Coverings**

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### **Why should I wear a face covering/How does it help prevent the virus from spreading?**

Face coverings prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing or coughing. If everyone wears a cloth face covering when out in public, such as when going to the grocery store, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 can be reduced for the community. Since people can spread the virus before symptoms start, or even if people never have symptoms, wearing a cloth face covering can protect others around you.

### **Where can I get a face covering/mask?**

Face coverings can be purchased at local retailers and online, or they can be handmade or even made from common household items such as scarves, bandanas, t-shirts or towels. Instructions for making homemade masks can be found at the [Colorado Mask Project](#).

### **How do I wear a face covering?**

The face covering should fit snugly, but comfortably over your chin, mouth and nose. It should not have any gaps where it sits on the face and allow for easy breathing. The face covering should stay in place at all times until it can be safely removed. [Follow this easy guide](#) for how to safely wear a face covering. [Get more tips here](#).

### **How do I clean it?**

Wash your face covering routinely after use. A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a face covering. Alternatively, face coverings may be cleaned by handwashing it in warm water with antimicrobial soap.

### **Can I get carbon dioxide poisoning or lowered oxygen levels from wearing a mask?**

According to the [Mayo Clinic Health System](#), “for many years, health care providers have worn masks for extended periods of time with no adverse health reactions ... there is no risk of hypoxia, which is lower oxygen levels in healthy adults. Carbon dioxide will freely diffuse through your mask as you breathe.”

### **What is the most recent science behind universal mask-wearing?**

- Masks appear to help keep the person wearing the mask from spreading COVID-19 to others by reducing the amount and distance infectious particles can spread through [partial filtering](#) of said particles.
- New evidence also suggests masks may also partially protect the wearer, especially from severe infection, by potentially reducing [viral inoculation dose](#) and/or [face touching](#).
- Individuals are thought to be best protected when both they and most others in their community wear masks.
- A seafood processing plant in Oregon that implemented universal mask-wearing had a [95% asymptomatic rate among 124 infected workers](#).
- In yet another instance, two infected hair salon employees in Missouri [did not transmit](#)

[any apparent infections to any of their 139 clients](#) in the setting of mask use by them and nearly all of their clients.

- Additionally, at a pediatric hemodialysis unit in Indiana which required universal masking, exposure to one symptomatic patient with COVID-19 likely resulted in [marked asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic seroconversion](#) among other patients (23%) and staff (44%).
- [Hamsters simulated to wear masks](#) had less severe COVID-19 infection than hamsters who were not simulated to wear masks when exposed to the virus.
- A [recent meta-analysis](#) suggests mask use may reduce infection rates by nearly 65%.
- A CDC editorial providing further evidence and advocating for universal mask-wearing is [here](#).