

Sacramento County Health Order
Information on Use of Cloth Face Coverings
May 22, 2020

This information can also be found [here](#).

As Sacramento County enters Stage 2 of the State of California’s Roadmap to Reopening, it is critical that all community members take upon themselves the responsibility to adhere to the important public health recommendations to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. This includes maintaining social distancing requirements of six feet or more, practicing good hand hygiene, staying home if ill, and wearing facial coverings when social distancing is not possible.

What is a Face Covering?

A face covering is a covering made of cloth, fabric or other soft or permeable material, without holes. It should cover the nose, mouth and chin. A facial covering should not hide or obscure the eyes. Examples of face covering includes a scarf, bandana, or neck gaiter. Face coverings can be cleaned via laundering in the warmest setting possible and dried. The face covering should be comfortable so that the wearer can breathe comfortably through the nose and does not have to adjust it frequently, so as to avoid touching the face.

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; those medical grade masks should be reserved for health care providers and first responders.

What is NOT a Face Covering

Any mask that incorporates a one-way valve (typically a raised plastic cylinder about the size of a quarter on the front or side of the mask) that is designed to facilitate easy exhaling is not a face covering under this Order and is not to be used to comply with this Order. Valves of that type permit droplet release from the mask, putting others nearby at risk.

When to Wear a Face Covering When Indoors in Public Places

Persons should wear face coverings when in public places, where social distancing of six feet or more can’t be achieved by persons of separate households, including, but not limited to:

- Grocery stores
- Office buildings
- Shopping malls
- Waiting for or riding on public transportation or paratransit or are in a taxi, private car service, or ride-sharing vehicle

When Outdoors

Persons should also wear face coverings when outdoors and social distancing of six feet or more cannot be achieved between persons from separate households.

Wearing a face covering is **not required** while engaging 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 that are not part of the same household to the greatest extent possible.

Additionally, each person engaged in such activity should bring a face covering and wear it at times when it is difficult to maintain compliance with social distancing requirements of six feet or more from another person.

Because running or bicycling causes people to more forcefully expel airborne particles, making the usual minimum 6 feet distance less adequate, runners and cyclists must take steps to avoid exposing others to those particles, which include the following measures:

- Crossing the street when running to avoid sidewalks with pedestrians
- Slowing down and moving to the side when unable to leave the sidewalk and nearing other people
- Never spitting
- Avoiding running or cycling directly in front of or behind another runner or cyclist who is not from the same household

When Driving Public Transit

Each driver or operator of any public transportation or paratransit vehicle, taxi, or private car service or ridesharing vehicle must wear a face covering while driving or operating such vehicle, regardless of whether a member of the public is in the vehicle, due to the need to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets in the vehicle at all times.

Exceptions

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.

Children younger than two years of age shall not wear a face covering due to the risk for suffocation.

For children older than two years of age, parents and guardians must take caution to ensure that those children are wearing face coverings appropriately. The American Academy of Pediatrics provides further specific face coverings guidance for children: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chestlungs/Pages/Cloth-Face-Coverings-for-Children-During-COVID-19.aspx>.

A face covering is also not required by this Order if an individual can show either:

- A medical professional has advised that wearing a face covering may pose a risk to the individual for health-related reasons; or
- Wearing a face covering would create a risk to the individual related to their work as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety policies or guidelines; or
- A face covering should also not be used by anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.