



TULARE COUNTY
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Timothy W. Lutz, MBA
Agency Director

Karen M. Elliott, MBA • Public Health Branch Director
Karen Haught, MD, M.P.H. • County Health Officer

Health Advisory Generally Recommending Face Coverings for the Public and Essential Workers

This health advisory seeks to inform the public about the need for Face Coverings when outside the home for the prevention and source control of COVID-19.

Summary

- Tulare County Public Health urges the public to use Face Coverings while attending to essential activities in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19
- Individuals are asked to ensure effective use of Face Coverings by washing their hands after putting on and taking of the Face Covering
- Essential businesses and their employees are asked to utilize Face Coverings when providing services to the public
- Essential businesses are asked to post signage informing the public of the requirement to utilize Face Coverings

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), California Department of Public Health (“CDPH”), and the Tulare County Public Health Branch (“TCPH”) have recommended that members of the public, should cover the mouth and nose to prevent inadvertently spreading the virus that causes Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”). One key transmission method for the COVID-19 virus is respiratory droplets that people expel when they breathe or sneeze. Individuals have been found to be infected with COVID-19 and not have any symptoms, meaning they are asymptomatic, but they can still be contagious. People can also be infected and contagious 48 hours before developing symptoms, the time when they are pre-symptomatic. Many people with the COVID-19 virus have mild symptoms and do not recognize they are infected and contagious, and they can unintentionally infect others. Therefore, the CDC, CDPH, and TCPH 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. For clarity, although wearing a face covering is one tool for reducing the spread of the virus, doing so is not a substitute for sheltering in place, physical distancing of at least 6 feet, and frequent hand washing.

This Advisory ***strongly recommends*** that people wear Face Coverings in three main settings. First, members of the public must wear Face Coverings while inside of or waiting in line to enter Essential Businesses and other businesses or facilities engaged in Minimum Basic Operations, providing Essential Infrastructure, and providing Essential Government Functions (except Healthcare Operations, which are subject to different requirements), when seeking healthcare from Healthcare Operations, and when waiting for or riding on



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public transportation and other types of shared transportation. These settings are defined further below.

Second, this Advisory also ***strongly recommends*** employees, contractors, owners, and volunteers of all Essential Businesses or those operating public transportation and other types of shared transportation to wear a Face Covering when at work.

And third, this Advisory also ***strongly recommends*** workers engaged in Minimum Basic Operations, Essential Infrastructure work, and Essential Government Functions to wear a Face Covering in areas where the public is present or likely to be and at any time when others are nearby.

This Advisory does not require that any child aged twelve years or younger wear a Face Covering and recommends that any child aged two years or younger should not wear one because of the risk of suffocation. This Advisory also does not apply to people who are in their own cars alone or with members of their own household. It also does not require people wear Face Coverings while engaged in outdoor recreation such as walking, hiking, bicycling, or running, though it does recommend that they have a Face Covering with them and still requires them to practice social distancing and other measures to protect against transmission of the virus.

Definition of Face Coverings

As used in this Advisory, 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. 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 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 Advisory. In general, even when not required by this Advisory, people are strongly encouraged to wear Face Coverings when in public.

A video showing 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 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.



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Effective Use

Face Coverings must be worn in such a manner as to contain respiratory droplets and minimize transmission of the virus via the hands. To achieve this, Face Coverings should fit snugly and washed daily. Cloth Face Coverings can be safely cleaned in a washing machine or by hand as the materials permit. Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, or mouth when removing their Face Coverings and wash their hands immediately after removing.

Members of the Public

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

1. When they are inside of, or in line to enter, any Essential Business, including, but not limited to, grocery stores, convenience stores, supermarkets, laundromats, and restaurants;
2. When they are inside or at any location or facility engaging in Minimum Basic Operations or seeking or receiving Essential Government Functions inside of any location or facility;
3. When they are engaged in Essential Infrastructure work
4. When they are obtaining services at Healthcare Operations— 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 healthcare services for animals — unless directed otherwise by an employee or worker at the Healthcare Operation; or
5. When they are waiting for or riding on public transportation or paratransit or are in a taxi, private car service, or ride-sharing vehicle.

Essential Businesses and Infrastructure

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:

1. 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:
 - a. interacting in person with any member of the public;
 - b. 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 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;



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- c. working in any space where food is prepared or packaged for sale or distribution to others;
 - d. working in or walking through common areas such as hallways, stairways, elevators, and parking facilities; or
 - e. in any room or enclosed area when other people (except for members of the person's own household or residence) are present.
2. 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. Essential Businesses and entities or organizations that 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 if those efforts are unsuccessful and seek to remove that person.

For clarity, 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.

Exceptions

1. Any child aged two years or less must not wear a Face Covering because of the risk of suffocation. This Order does not require that any child aged twelve years or less wear a Face Covering. Parents and caregivers must supervise use of Face Coverings by children to avoid misuse.
2. 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. 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: wearing a Face Covering when possible; 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; and avoiding running or cycling directly in front of or behind another runner or cyclist who is not in the same household.
3. This Advisory 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.
4. A Face Covering is also not required by this Advisory to be worn by a particular 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



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by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines. 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.

Conclusion

The intent of this Order is to ensure that all people who are visiting or working at Essential Businesses and all people who are seeking care at healthcare facilities or engaged in certain types of public transit or transportation with others wear a Face Covering to reduce the likelihood that they may transmit or receive the COVID-19 virus. The intent of this Advisory is also to ensure that people who work for or seek services from entities engaged in Essential Infrastructure work, Minimum Basic Operations, or Essential Government Functions also wear a Face Covering when they are in close proximity to others. In so doing, this Advisory will help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus and mitigate the impact of the virus on members of the public and on the delivery of critical healthcare services to those in need. All provisions of this Order must be interpreted to effectuate this intent.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Haught".

Karen Haught MD, MPH
Health Officer of Tulare County