



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Health Officer Order for Public to wear Facial Coverings

SANTA ROSA, CA - The Sonoma County Health Officer has issued a new Health Order requiring that everyone wear facial coverings as an additional measure to stop the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) locally.

The Order states people must wear a facial covering before they enter:

- an indoor facility (except their home);
- any enclosed space;
- an outdoor space where they cannot keep a distance of six feet away from others at all times.

This Order applies to employers who continue to operate, under the March 31, 2020 Extending Shelter in Place Order. Employers who require their employees to leave their residence to work or provide a service must make sure that their employees comply with this Order while on duty by either:

- supplying employees with facial coverings, or
- making sure that employees have access to facial coverings, or
- that their employees are using their own facial coverings.

Employers may to the extent already authorized by law refuse admission or service to any customer or visitor who refuses to comply with this Order.

“We hope those in our County understand the importance of complying with these Orders and cover their faces when engaging in essential activities in public. I would like to emphasize the public’s role in helping stop the spread of COVID-19 by using facial coverings and continuing to stay at home,” said Sonoma County Chair, Susan Gorin.

The health order will go into effect 12:01 a.m. Friday, April 17, 2020, to allow time for the general public and employers to procure appropriate facial coverings and get into compliance.

Facial coverings means any fabric or cloth that covers the mouth and nose. The facial covering can be made using common everyday household items, can be sewn by hand, or factory-made; no one needs to purchase a mask in order to comply with this Order.

The Health Officer is discouraging the public from purchasing medical grade surgical or N95 masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers. Facial coverings should be frequently washed, sanitized, or changed, and everyone should wash their hands as soon as possible after touching their facial coverings.

Facial coverings should not be placed on children under the age of 2 nor on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

“These measures recently put in place are having an effect in limiting the spread of COVID-19 in Sonoma County. The use of facial coverings is another strategy to stop the virus from spreading from infected people who do not present symptoms. As we approach an expected surge in cases, we are increasing protective measures,” said Dr. Sundari Mase, Sonoma County Health Officer.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers these guidelines for face coverings:

- fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- is secured with ties or ear loops
- includes multiple layers of fabric
- allows for breathing without restriction
- is able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

This [CDC page](#) includes detailed instructions on how to create various types of face coverings using items from home.

The most important safety step, they say, is to keep six feet or more away from others.

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