



Public Health Brief

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Public Health Officials Release Guidance Requiring Californians to Wear Face Coverings in Most Settings Outside the Home

*Californians Must Wear Face Coverings
When in Higher-Risk Situations, Especially Indoors*

Face Coverings Help Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

Governor Newsom: "Simply put, we are seeing too many people with faces uncovered – putting at risk the real progress we have made in fighting the disease."

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health today released updated guidance that requires Californians to wear a face covering in high-risk settings. A growing body of scientific research has shown that people with no or few symptoms of COVID-19 can still spread the disease and that the use of face coverings, combined with physical distancing and frequent hand washing, will reduce the spread of COVID-19.

"Science shows that face coverings and masks work," said Governor Gavin Newsom. "They are critical to keeping those who are around you safe, keeping businesses open and restarting our economy."



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Governor Newsom also addressed why he took this action now. “Simply put, we are seeing too many people with faces uncovered – putting at risk the real progress we have made in fighting the disease. California’s strategy to restart the economy and get people back to work will only be successful if people act safely and follow health recommendations. That means wearing a face covering, washing your hands and practicing physical distancing.”

“As Californians venture into our communities more, wearing face coverings is another important way we can help protect one another,” said Dr. Sonia Angell, State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health. “Combined with physical distancing and frequent hand washing, wearing cloth face coverings when we are with others outside of our household will reduce the spread of COVID-19, which is still a very real threat across our state.”

Today's guidance mandates the use of cloth face coverings by the general public statewide when outside the home, with limited exceptions.

Californians must wear face coverings when they are in the situations listed below:

- Inside of, or in line to enter, any indoor public space;
- Obtaining services from the healthcare sector in settings including, but not limited to, a hospital, pharmacy, medical clinic, laboratory, physician or dental office, veterinary clinic, or blood bank;
- Waiting for or riding on public transportation or paratransit or while in a taxi, private car service, or ride-sharing vehicle;
- Engaged in work, whether at the workplace or performing work off-site, when:
 - Interacting in-person with any member of the public;
 - Working in any space visited by members of the public, regardless of whether anyone from the public is present at the time;
 - Working in any space where food is prepared or packaged for sale or distribution to others;
 - Working in or walking through common areas, such as hallways, stairways, elevators, and parking facilities;



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- In any room or enclosed area where other people (except for members of the person's own household or residence) are present when unable to physically distance.
- Driving or operating any public transportation or paratransit vehicle, taxi, or private car service or ride-sharing vehicle when passengers are present. When no passengers are present, face coverings are strongly recommended.
- While outdoors in public spaces when maintaining a physical distance of six feet from persons who are not members of the same household or residence is not feasible.

The following individuals are exempt from wearing a face covering:

- Children aged two and under;
- Persons with a medical, mental health, or developmental disability that prevents wearing a face covering;
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication;
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- Persons who are obtaining a service involving the nose or face for which temporary removal of the face covering is necessary to perform the service;
- Persons who are seated at a restaurant or other establishment that offers food or beverage service, while they are eating or drinking, provided that they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet away from persons who are not members of the same household or residence;
- Persons who are engaged in outdoor work or recreation such as swimming, walking, hiking, bicycling, or running, when alone or with household members, and when they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others;
- Persons who are incarcerated. Prisons and jails, as part of their mitigation plans, will have specific guidance on the wearing of face coverings or masks for both inmates and staff.

More information about the state's COVID-19 guidance is on the [California Department of Public Health's Guidance web page](#).

More information about reopening California and what individuals can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19, visit [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in California](#).



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