



Cape Girardeau County Public Health Center

Face Covering Order FAQ

This is a running document and subject to change.

When does the Face Covering Rescinded Order go into effect?

This rescinding/lifting of this order goes into effect on Monday, March 8, 2021, at 9:45 AM.

Are businesses required to continue asking customers to wear masks?

CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings, at events and gatherings, and anywhere they will be around other people. Individual businesses may still ask patrons to wear mask and require masks for them to enter their facility.

If I wear a face covering, do I still have to physically distance?

Yes, physical distancing should always be practiced, and face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing. Face coverings act as an additional layer of protection in slowing the spread of the virus.

If I am vaccinated, do I still need to wear a mask?

While available COVID-19 vaccines have demonstrated high efficacy at preventing severe and/or symptomatic COVID-19, there is currently limited information on how much the vaccines might reduce transmission and how long protection lasts. In addition, the efficacy of the vaccines against emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants is not known. At this time, vaccinated people should continue to follow current guidance to protect themselves and others, including wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, covering coughs and sneezes, and washing hands often.

What defines a face covering?

Face Coverings for the purpose of this order means a device, usually made of cloth, which covers the nose and mouth. Consistent with current CDC guidelines, face coverings prevent those who may have COVID-19 from spreading it to others. Cloth face coverings are recommended for the general public over surgical or N95 respirators, which should be reserved for medical professionals and first responders. Nothing in this Order should prevent workers or customers from wearing a surgical-grade face covering or other more protective Face covering if the individual is already in possession of such equipment, or if the business otherwise provides their workers with such equipment due to the nature of the work involved.

How do you properly wear a face covering?

Your face covering should cover your face from the bridge of your nose to under your chin. It should be loose-fitting but still secure enough to stay in place. Make sure you can talk with your face covering on and that it does not irritate you, so you are not tempted to touch it or pull it out of place, which could put you at risk from touching your face or limit its effectiveness.

Can schools continue to require children and staff to wear masks?

When you wear a mask, you protect others as well as yourself. Masks work best when everyone wears one. It is especially important to wear a mask when you are indoors with people you do not live with and when you are unable to stay at least 6 feet apart since COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another. Schools are governed by their own Boards and need to follow the advice of those boards and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Schools may continue requiring masks for staff and children.

Do I need to wear a face covering at a restaurant or bar?

Face coverings should be worn in restaurants and bars as you wait to be seated and while you walk to your table in the dining area. Once seated, you can remove your Face covering if you are safely distanced from others. The Face covering should be put on anytime you leave the table.

When should I not wear a face covering? Below are examples of individuals that may not be able to wear mask as recommended:

- a. Children under the age of 3;
- b. Children between the ages of 3-9 are strongly encouraged, but not required, to wear a Face Covering, while under the direct supervision of an adult;
- c. Persons with health conditions that prohibit wearing a Face Covering. Nothing in this Order shall require the use of a Face Covering by any person for whom doing so would be contrary to their health or safety because of a medical condition;
- d. Persons who have trouble breathing, or are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the Face Covering without assistance;
- e. Persons who are hearing impaired, or someone who is communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication;
- f. Persons who are at a place of Business or Public Space who are consuming food or drink while adequately distanced from other patrons and staff;
- g. Persons who are at a public pool while in the water;
- h. 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; and
- i. Persons playing a sport;

j. Persons exercising or using exercise equipment where participants are at least 6 feet apart.

Where can I get a face covering if I do not have one?

Both reusable and cloth face coverings can be purchased at many different locations around the county, including grocery stores, retail establishments, or online retailers. There are also many local cloth face covering makers in and around Cape County that you can find via Facebook marketplace or other buying and selling groups. If you are unable to purchase a face covering, there are many options to turn household items into face coverings. See the link provided on how to make a cloth face covering.

What should I look for when buying a face covering?

Look for face coverings made with at least 2 layers of fabric. It should cover your nose and mouth without large gaps. The Face covering should have ear loops or ties so you can adjust it. For people who wear glasses, look for a face covering with a bendable border at the top so you can mold the Face covering to fit the bridge of your nose and prevent your glasses from fogging.

I am an employer. Where can I get face coverings for my employees?

Employers can order face coverings through any supplier. One option is the Missouri PPE marketplace located on the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services website: PPE Resource Process and Requests | COVID-19 Outbreak | Health & Senior Services. Also, our local chambers of commerce have a limited supply of face coverings for local businesses.

How long can I wear a disposable face covering?

Disposable face coverings can be reused multiple times until they are damaged or soiled. You can clean disposable face coverings before reuse by spraying with an alcohol solution and allowing them to dry completely before wearing again. It is important to always remove face coverings correctly and wash your hands after handling or touching a used face covering.

How can I wash my cloth face covering, and how often should I clean it?

Cloth face coverings should be washed at least once a day. It is important to always remove face coverings correctly and wash your hands after handling or touching a used face covering. The CDC has more information on how to wash a cloth face covering: How to Wash a Cloth Face Covering. You can also check with local cleaners to determine if they will clean cloths face coverings for you.

What are some tips for making a cloth face covering?

Bandanas, scarves, hand towels, or any items made of cotton or linen can easily be used as a face covering, as many have these items at home. The CDC has more information on how to make cloth face coverings at home. Instructions are included for sewn and non-sewn face coverings: How to Make Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow Spread.

What is the science behind the effectiveness of face covering wearing?

The recommendation from the CDC to wear a cloth face covering during the COVID-19 pandemic is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with emerging evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that shows cloth face coverings reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth. For a recent study showing the effectiveness of masks see:

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7010e3.htm?s_cid=mm7010e3_w.

How do face coverings prevent the spread of COVID-19?

According to the CDC, cloth face coverings are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the cloth face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), so the use of cloth face coverings is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where physical distancing is difficult to maintain.

Can I wear a face shield instead of a face covering?

The CDC does not recommend the use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. However, for persons with health conditions that prohibit the wearing of face coverings a face shield may be a better alternative than nothing.

Can wearing a face covering make me sick?

Face coverings may be uncomfortable or difficult to get used to, but there is no sufficient evidence suggesting that wearing a face covering can make a healthy individual sick. Both surgical and cloth face coverings are porous, allowing for normal breathing. According to the CDC, it is unlikely that wearing a face covering will cause a buildup of CO₂.

I am a business owner/manager. Can I remove signs requiring masks?

Yes. All Businesses and other entities that provide a Public Space are strongly encouraged to continue asking patrons to wear a mask. There is no requirement to post a sign requiring masks at this time, although businesses may continue to post signage and require masks.