

DUVAL COUNTY EXECUTIVE ORDER: FACE COVERING MANDATE

Frequently Asked Questions

Why place such an Order at this time? The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) recommend wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Wearing face coverings is essential for the safety of the community because we must do all we can for the health and safety of the public and to lessen the strain on our healthcare system,

What is the Order all about? As previously stated, the goal is to stop the spread (“flatten the curve”) of COVID-19. Medical experts have found that many infected people are asymptomatic (without any symptoms) and there are possible delays between contraction and physical symptoms. Face coverings primarily help prevent the wearer from spreading the virus to others.

What kind of covering does it need to be? Anything that can reduce bodily droplets from escaping from the nose or mouth into the air or external surfaces: A homemade cloth mask, handkerchief, bandana, t-shirt, anything. We recommend that you do not purchase medical grade masks so that the healthcare personnel will have sufficient access and enough supplies available to them as needed.

Do these cloth coverings actually work? Although it is true that homemade face coverings may not be 100% as effective as medical grade protective gear that healthcare workers use; however, any face covering will reduce the transmission of germs and viruses. The most effective fabrics are tightly woven – not knit. Many members of our communities are now making and selling masks, and we ask that those masks remain reasonably priced so as to not take advantage of the urgent pandemic situation. The CDC offers guidance and instructions on making your own face covering at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

Where do I need a face covering? Ideally, anytime you are out of your home in public is a good time to have a face covering. However, the mandate applies to places such as grocery stores, gas stations, ATMs, drive-thru windows, or other places of public business where it is difficult to maintain social distance.

Where can I be without a face covering? A face covering is not necessary when:

- you engage in physical activity or exercise outdoors, such as walking, running, or biking so long as proper social distancing is maintained;
- you are riding in a personal vehicle;
- you are alone in a separate single space;
- you are within your own shelter group;
- you are eating or drinking.

Do I need a face covering around my family or workplace? It depends. Any person who has possibly been exposed to COVID-19 should isolate themselves, and they and their household members should wear a face covering as much as possible. If your work involves being around others in close proximity, then you must be wearing a face covering.

Could I be cited by police? Yes, it is possible. If you are without a face covering in a public place or business where social distancing is difficult to maintain, then you are in violation of this Order. Please keep in mind that the intent is not to penalize, but to educate and achieve compliance based on reasoning, care, and compassion for all of our community members.