



Public Health Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Press Release

For Release: Immediately

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Date: April 21, 2020

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HEALTH OFFICER TO ISSUE FACE COVERINGS ORDER

Santa Cruz County, CA - Santa Cruz County Health Officer Dr. Gail Newel is preparing a new order requiring patrons and staff at essential businesses to wear face coverings to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

To be issued this week, the order will follow new requirements in place throughout much of the Bay Area, and is intended to further slow the spread of novel coronavirus. The order impacts public, commercial and governmental spaces where face-to-face interactions may pose a risk of transmission, including grocery stores, health care offices, restaurant pickup counters, public transit, essential government offices and more.

“We are making great progress in flattening the curve and preventing the spread of COVID-19,” Dr. Newel said. “However, we now know that COVID-19 can be transmitted by infected patients for days before they are symptomatic. These measures are intended to protect our essential workers and each other, and I urge everyone to follow this order closely.”

Businesses must take reasonable measures, such as posting signs, to remind visitors about face coverings, and may not serve customers who do not observe the order. Workers do not need to face coverings if they are alone in a personal office but must put them on when others enter.

Residents are encouraged to continue to practice safe physical distancing when they go out to exercise or for recreation. Individuals engaged on outdoor recreation and who are able to practice distancing (joggers, cyclists, hikers, etc.) are not required to wear face coverings, but should move to avoid close proximity with passers-by.



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The order also includes customers of public transit (including while waiting at transit stops), rideshare services, and passengers in private automobiles who are not members of the same household.

The order does not require children 12 and younger to wear face coverings. Children two years old or younger *must not* wear them due to risk of suffocation.

When donning and doffing face coverings, be careful not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Face coverings should be washed regularly. Face coverings can be:

- Homemade masks
- Bandanas
- Neck gaiters
- T-shirts
- Towels or other cloth materials

Face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction

Due to ongoing shortages of personal protective equipment, the public is discouraged from using medical-grade masks, such as N95 masks or surgical masks. Those supplies should be reserved for health care workers and first responders. If you have medical-grade masks and would like to donate them, go to www.santacruzcounty.us/ppedonate.

The County's Shelter-in-Place order remains in effect through May 3.

For local information on COVID-19, go to www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, call 211 or text "COVID19" to 211211. Residents may also call (831) 454-4242 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., seven days a week.

For guides on homemade face coverings, please see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

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