"Safer at Home" Mask Requirement Frequently Asked Questions

1. When do I have to wear a mask?

You have to wear a mask when you are in public and in close contact with other people. Specifically, the order says to wear a mask when you are within six feet of a person from another household in any of the following places: (a) an indoor space open to the public; (b) a vehicle operated by a transportation service; and (c) an outdoor public space where ten or more people are gathered.

2. Do young children have to wear a mask? What about people who are exercising? In other words, are there any exceptions to the mask-wearing requirement?

There are five categories of exceptions. The largest category, exceptions for "practical necessity," covers people or situations where mask use is incompatible with the realities of life—for example, children six or younger, people with certain medical conditions or disabilities, eating and drinking, medical and dental procedures, and so on. There are also categories of exceptions for exercise, for communicating with an audience, and for certain essential job functions. An additional category carves out narrow exceptions for protected activities like voting and religious worship—but even then, wearing a mask is strongly encouraged.

3. What kind of face mask is required?

The requirement allows all kinds of masks to be used—whether store-bought, homemade, or improvised from household items like scarves, bandanas, or t-shirts. The key is for the mask to cover your nostrils and mouth. For instructions on how to make your own mask, see the CDC's "How to Make Cloth Face Coverings," available at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html.

4. I live in a city or county that already has a local mask order. Am I supposed to follow my local order or this new statewide order?

Follow this new statewide order. While this order is in effect, it will replace all local mask rules to provide a uniform, statewide rule.

5. I am a business owner. What does this order mean for my business?

The order requires businesses to take reasonable steps, where practicable, to encourage mask use by employees and customers. One example of a reasonable step might be to post signs encouraging customers and patrons to wear a mask. Although a business is not required to deny entry to people who are mask-less, they always retain the right to do so—and doing so would certainly be a reasonable step to encourage mask use.

6. How long will the new mask requirement be in effect?

The new mask requirement goes into effect Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. It is currently set to expire on July 31, 2020.