North Carolina Tightens Existing Mask Requirements and Enforcement

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. November 24, 2020 — Gov. Roy Cooper has issued additional COVID-19 safety measures to tighten mask requirements and enforcement as cases continue to rise rapidly in North Carolina and across the country. Executive Order No. 180 goes into effect at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 25, and runs through Dec. 11.

"I have a stark warning for North Carolinians today: We are in danger," Cooper said. "This is a pivotal moment in our fight against the coronavirus. Our actions now will determine the fate of many."

Holiday guidance
Everyone is advised to celebrate Thanksgiving only with the people they live with.

If you gather for the holidays: Keep it small, keep it outdoors, and wear a mask at all times. Remember your 3Ws: Wear a mask. Wash your hands. Wait 6 feet from others. In addition, stay home away from others if sick.

Download SlowCOVIDNC at https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/slowcovidnc to protect you and your loved ones. See additional holiday guidance on the CDC, state and Orange County websites.

See a video from the Orange County Health Department on how to gather safely. It is also available in Spanish.

Tighter restrictions
In addition to extending Phase 3 capacity limits and safety requirements, the order tightens the existing statewide mask requirement — making it clear that everyone needs to wear a mask whenever they are with someone who is not from the same household. The order also makes the face covering requirements enforceable now by law enforcement against individuals. The order adds the mask requirement to several additional settings, including:

- Any public indoor space even when maintaining 6 feet of distance.
- Dining tables except when actively drinking or eating.
- Gyms even when exercising.
- All schools public and private.
- All public or private transportation when traveling with people outside of the household.

The order also requires large retail businesses with more than 15,000 square feet to have an employee stationed near entrances to ensure mask wearing and occupancy limits for patrons who enter.

County Alert System
The state has updated its COVID-19 County Alert System map due to the rapid rise in cases and hospitalization over the past week. The map was intended to be updated every four weeks.

Since the system was introduced last week, 10 more counties have moved into the red category, indicating critical community spread. There are now 20 red counties and 42 orange counties, with orange indicating substantial community spread. Orange County remains in the yellow zone of significant community spread. Read the update to see where each county stands; how the system was designed; and recommended actions for individuals, businesses, community organizations and public officials in each zone.

"The coming weeks will be a true test of our resolve to do what it takes to keep people from getting sick, to save lives, and to make sure that if you need hospital care — whether it's for a heart attack or a car accident or COVID-19 — you can get it," said Dr. Mandy Cohen, secretary of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Read Executive Order 180.

Read a Frequently Asked Questions document about the Order.

Read the slides from the governor's briefing.

Reliable Information

For the latest information and guidance relating to Orange County's COVID-19 response:
- Visit www.orangecountync.gov/coronavirus.
- Receive text updates on the crisis by texting 888-777 with OCNCHEALTH for English speakers and OCNCSALUD for Spanish speakers.
- Sign up for weekly e-newsletter about the COVID-19 response via the county website.
- Follow the Orange County Health Department on Facebook and Twitter.
- The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services updates its COVID-19 case count dashboard daily at 12 p.m.

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