

BY ORDER OF ORANGE COUNTY

Face Coverings

REQUIRED Indoors in Public



Frequently Asked Questions about the Face Covering Mandate

Why do I need to wear a cloth face covering?

Cloth face coverings, also called masks, slow the spread of COVID-19 by preventing the spread of germs. Cases of COVID-19 in Orange County and North Carolina continue to rise, meaning additional steps are needed to combat this pandemic. **Face coverings are required in all indoor public places, including public transportation facilities and vehicles.**

Who has to wear a cloth face covering in public?

Any person age 2 or older must wear a face covering at all times while in public settings. This applies to:

- All customers, employees and other users of restaurants, grocery, and retail stores while they are indoors.
- All occupants of public transportation vehicles.
- Anyone in any other indoor, public place.

What is a public place?

Public places refer to offices, business establishments, and other places where people may travel or congregate.

Who is not required to wear face coverings?

A face covering is not required for:

- Children under 2 years old.
- Children under 5 if a parent, guardian, or responsible person has been unable to place and maintain a face covering safely on the child's face.
- Complying with directions of law enforcement officers.
- Settings where it is not practical or feasible to wear a face covering when obtaining or rendering goods or services, ie. esthetician services.
- Anyone with a diagnosed medical or behavioral condition or disability, including difficulty breathing.
- Anyone who is actively eating or drinking.
- Anyone who is seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired in a way that requires the mouth to be visible.

- Anyone who is giving a speech or performance for a broadcast or to an audience where they maintain a distance of at least 20 feet is maintained from the audience.
- Anyone who is working alone in an individual office setting. Face coverings must be applied when in common areas such as breakrooms, hallways, restrooms, or other areas where additional persons may be encountered.
- Anyone who has determined the face covering is impeding the person's visibility in the operation of equipment or a vehicle.

What is a face covering?

A face covering includes anything that covers your nose and mouth, such as a mask, scarf or bandana. Make sure your cloth face covering:

- Fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Completely covers the nose and mouth
- Is secured with ties or ear loops
- Includes multiple layers of fabric
- Allows for breathing without restriction
- Can be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

How will this be enforced?

The mandate's goal is to protect the public health by increasing the use of masks. The declaration will be supported through education and public awareness. Individuals who do not feel comfortable in any setting should leave that setting. If you feel a business is failing to adhere to the policy, please fill out this form so that an Environmental Health Specialist can work with the business to comply with the requirement:

www.orangecountync.gov/RegisterComplaint

If you feel uncomfortable while conducting business, you may also choose to speak with the manager to express your concerns. If you see someone without a face covering, assume they have a valid reason for not wearing one and increase your distance from that person. The most loving thing you can do for your community is to take care of yourself by wearing a face covering when out in public. We are all in this together.

How can businesses get customers to wear masks?

Businesses are encouraged to post a sign notifying customers of the mandate. Orange County has created signs for businesses in multiple languages. They are available at:

www.orangecountync.gov/masks

Businesses also are encouraged to make disposable masks available for customers who don't have one or offer affordable masks for sale. Ultimately, people will shop where they feel safe. For people who are not able to wear a face covering, businesses are encouraged to make curbside service available to them.



Can I be asked to leave a store or denied entry for not wearing a face covering?

Because they are privately owned, at their discretion, businesses can deny entrance to

any person who does not wear a mask. Individual stores may have their own rules/policies about letting people into their store without a face covering. Please check with individual stores.

How can I go shopping if I am exempt from wearing a mask but a store denies me entry?

If you are unable to wear a face covering for medical or behavioral reasons (ex. asthma, COPD, claustrophobia, autism, etc.), designate someone else in your household as the “errand runner.” If this is not possible and you have to go out, try to maintain physical distance from others as much as possible. Check the individual store’s policy. For people who are not able to wear a face covering, businesses are encouraged to make curbside service available to them.