



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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**ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH  
AMENDING ORDER 20-03**

**20-03.2**

**Face Coverings - Statewide**

**WHEREAS**, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee has issued Proclamation 20-05, subsequently amended and extended, proclaiming a statewide State of Emergency due to an outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States and community spread of COVID-19 in Washington State; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets when infected people, many of whom do not exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, cough, sneeze, or talk, and evidence suggests that wearing a cloth face covering reduces an infected person's chance of spreading the infection to others and may protect uninfected persons from larger droplets from infected people around them; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington State Department of Health, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the World Health Organization recommend that people wear cloth face coverings when they are gathered with non-household members or in public settings, given the substantial number of cases of COVID-19 infection, these precautions must be mandatory; and

**WHEREAS**, although many Washingtonians wear face coverings voluntarily when in public, requiring all Washingtonians to wear cloth face coverings in public, subject to certain exceptions, helps control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Washington State; and

**WHEREAS**, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and its progression in Washington State continue to constitute an emergency threatening the safety of the public health, demanding action by the Secretary of Health, and only a small number of Washington's local health officers have issued orders requiring the general public in their jurisdictions to wear cloth face coverings in public; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 24, 2020, Order of the Secretary of Health 20-03 was issued, directing every person in Washington State to wear a face covering when in any indoor or outdoor public setting, subject to certain exceptions; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 24, 2020, Order of the Secretary of Health 20-03.1 was issued, directing every person in Washington State to wear a face covering when outside of their dwelling unit, subject to certain exception; and

**WHEREAS**, for the same reasons stated above, requiring people to wear face coverings when in a place where non-household members are present or generally accessible to non-household members will help control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Washington State; and

**WHEREAS**, it is scientifically appropriate to amend the face covering order to incorporate new CDC guidance recommending that fully vaccinated people need not wear face coverings, except in certain limited settings.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Washington State Secretary of Health, as a result of the above-noted situation, and under RCW 43.70.130, RCW 70.05.070, WAC 246-100-036, and any other applicable authority, do hereby amend Orders 20-03 and 20-03.1 and order as follows:

### **General Face Covering Requirement**

**Every person in Washington State must wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth when they are in a place where people from outside their household are present or in a place that is generally accessible to people from outside their household, subject to the exceptions below and any face covering requirements and limitations on gatherings and activities imposed by the Governor or other legal authority.**

- If a person lives in a congregate living setting where they share living facilities with other residents, their household includes only the people who regularly reside in their bedroom. They must wear a face covering when they are outside their bedroom, including inside the building, subject to the exceptions below.
- Congregate living settings include, but are not limited to, fraternity, sorority, boarding, and other similar shared houses, dormitory buildings, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult family homes, other long-term care facilities, group care facilities, and other similar settings.
- Unless listed above, congregate living settings do not otherwise include houses, mobile homes, apartments, condominiums, hotel or motel rooms, supported living homes, state-operated living alternatives, state-owned psychiatric hospitals, or psychiatric residential treatment facilities.
- A bedroom includes any living space, bathroom, or facility attached to the bedroom that is not generally open to the other residents of the congregate living setting.

### **Exceptions to General Face Covering Requirement**

**People are not required to wear face coverings in any of the following situations:**

- When outdoors, provided that a distance of at least six feet is maintained from people from outside their household;
- At a small gathering in a place not generally open to the public that is attended only by people fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and by unvaccinated people from a single household in which no one is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19;
- While engaged in the act of eating or drinking, subject to sector-specific limitations issued by the Governor when in public settings or the social at home gathering limits in the Healthy Washington plan, both accessible at <https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources/covid-19-reopening-guidance>;

- While showering, bathing, or engaging in other personal hygiene or grooming activities that require the removal of the face covering;
- When any party to a communication is deaf or hard of hearing and not wearing a face covering is essential to communication;
- While obtaining a service that requires temporary removal of the face covering;
- While sleeping;
- When necessary to confirm the person's identity;
- When federal or state law prohibits wearing a face covering or requires the removal of a face covering; or
- When unable to put on a face covering due to an emergency.

### **People Exempt from General Face Covering Requirement**

**The following people are exempt from the requirement to wear a face covering:**

- People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, except when in health care settings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, or schools;
- Children younger than five years old; and
  - Children who are younger than two years old should never wear face coverings due to the risk of suffocation.
  - Children who are two, three, or four years old, with the assistance and close supervision of an adult, are strongly recommended to wear a face covering at all times in settings, like grocery stores or pharmacies, where it is likely that a distance of at least six feet cannot be maintained from non-household members and vulnerable people must go.
- People with a medical condition, mental health condition, developmental or cognitive condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, people with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.

### **Additional Provisions**

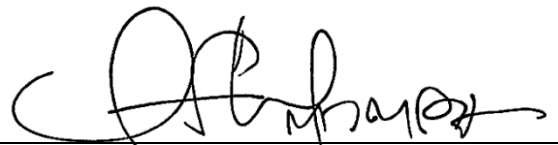
- Types of face coverings permitted
  - For purposes of this order, a face covering must:
    - Fit snugly against the sides of the face;
    - Completely cover the nose and mouth;
    - Be secured with ties, ear loops, elastic bands, or other equally effective method; and
    - Include at least one layer of tightly woven fabric without visible holes, although multiple layers are strongly recommended.
  - A face covering may also be a mask or face covering that provides a higher level of protection than a cloth face covering, such as a medical procedure/surgical mask, a KN95 mask, or an N95 mask.
  - Clear masks or cloth masks with a clear plastic panel may be used when interacting with people who are deaf or hard of hearing, young children or students learning to read, students learning a new language, people with disabilities, and people who need to see the proper shape of the mouth for making appropriate vowel sounds.
  - Children and staff in childcare facilities and K-12 public and private schools may use face shields with drapes or wraps as an alternative to cloth face coverings if authorized pursuant to an order of the Governor.

- A person is fully vaccinated against COVID-19 two weeks after they have received the second dose in a two-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) or two weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen).
- A person is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 if they have any of the medical conditions identified by the CDC as making a person more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19. These conditions are currently listed on the following CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>.
- This order does not apply to persons who are incarcerated. Correctional facilities have specific guidance on the wearing of face coverings or masks for both incarcerated individuals and staff.
- Face covering requirements imposed by other public agencies or officials
  - Face covering requirements lawfully imposed by another public agency or official are to be followed if they are more protective than the requirements in this order. If they are less protective, then this order must be followed.
    - For example, this order allows fully vaccinated individuals to not wear face coverings, except when in health care settings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, or schools. If a local health officer issues an order requiring people to wear face coverings in other settings not listed, then the local health officer's order must be followed.
  - Notwithstanding the foregoing, any face covering requirements imposed pursuant to an order of the Governor take precedence over this order.

This order shall take effect on May 15, 2021, and remain in effect until rescinded or superseded by a subsequent order of the Secretary of Health or until the Governor issues a proclamation declaring the termination of the State of Emergency declared by Proclamation 20-05, as amended and extended by subsequent amendatory proclamations, whichever is earlier.

Members of the public are required by law to comply with this order, and violators may be subject to enforcement action pursuant to RCW 43.70.130(7), RCW 70.05.120(4), and WAC 246-100-070(3).

Signed this 15<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2021.



Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH  
Secretary of Health