



Public Health Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

POST OFFICE BOX 962, 1080 Emeline Ave., SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-0962

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For Release: Immediately

Date: August 19, 2021

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER ISSUES ORDER REQUIRING USE OF FACE COVERINGS IN INDOOR SETTINGS

Santa Cruz County, Calif. – With the increase on COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations due to the highly contagious Delta variant, the Santa Cruz County Health Officer is issuing a Health Order, effective August 20, 2021 at 11:59 p.m., requiring all individuals to wear a face covering when in indoor settings regardless of vaccination status.

In accordance with guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the order will sunset once community transmission levels return to “Moderate” (Yellow Level), as determined by the CDC (see <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>).

“While vaccination remains the best and most effective tool in preventing COVID-19, the Delta variant spreads quickly among the unvaccinated and may even be passed between vaccinated persons, although their symptoms are usually mild. Face coverings will provide added protection until everyone is able to be vaccinated, especially children,” Santa Cruz County Health Officer Dr. Gail Newel said.

To help assure compliance, all businesses and governmental entities must require employees to wear masks and post signage that is clearly visible and easy-to-read at all entry points for indoor settings informing the public of the mask requirement. Those at home or working in a closed room or office alone or with members of their household do not have to wear a mask, and masks are not required during indoor activities where they cannot be worn such as eating, drinking, swimming, showering in a fitness facility, or obtaining medical or cosmetic services.

Signage is available in Public Health’s Signs/Media Library:

<https://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/PublicHealth/CommunicableDiseaseControl/CoronavirusHome/PublicInformation/SignsMediaLibrary.aspx>

While masking is a helpful tool to control spread during the Delta surge, getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from infection, hospitalization, or death. For information on COVID-19 vaccine and a list of vaccine providers including local pop-up clinics, visit www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirusvaccine.

For local information on COVID-19, go to www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, or call (831) 454-4242 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.



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ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER REQUIRING USE OF FACE COVERINGS INDOORS BY ALL PERSONS

Please read this Order carefully. Violation of or failure to comply with this Order is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. (California Health and Safety Code § 120295, *et seq.*; Cal. Penal Code §§ 69, 148(a)(1).)

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ (“HEALTH OFFICER”) ORDERS:

1. This Order is made in light of the recent significant increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in Santa Cruz County (“County”), due primarily to the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Emerging evidence indicates that the Delta variant is more transmissible than prior variants of the virus, may cause more severe illness, and that even fully vaccinated individuals can spread the virus to others. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) now both recommend that all persons—regardless of vaccination status—wear face coverings indoors. Vaccination remains the best and most effective tool in preventing COVID-19 and its harms; evidence shows that even against the Delta variant, fully vaccinated individuals have substantial protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. In considering options to stem the rapid increase in COVID-19 transmission, a continued increase in the proportion of the population vaccinated is the best measure available. However, universal use of face coverings indoors is the least disruptive and most immediately impactful additional measure to take.
2. This Order shall become effective at 11:59 p.m. on August 20, 2021 and will continue to be in effect until the County of Santa Cruz enters a level at or lower than the Moderate (Yellow) Level of Community Transmission on the CDC’s COVID Data Tracker, found here: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view> (currently, the County is in the High (Red) Level of Community Transmission). When the County enters a level at or lower than the Moderate Level of Community Transmission, a press release will be issued announcing the rescission of this Order.
3. All individuals, businesses and government agencies in the County of Santa Cruz (“County”) are required to follow the provisions of this Order. This Order applies to the unincorporated areas of the County as well as the cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and Watsonville.

4. **Requirement to Wear Face Coverings Indoors.**

- a. Regardless of vaccination status, all persons must wear face coverings at all times when indoors except:
 - i. in their own residence or working in a closed room or office alone or with members of their household;
 - ii. when they are actively performing an activity that cannot be done while wearing a face covering (e.g., actively eating or drinking, swimming or showering in a fitness facility, or obtaining a medical or cosmetic service requiring removal of a face covering); or
 - iii. as specifically exempted from use of face coverings under the guidance of CDPH at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx> (e.g., to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or where a face covering poses a safety risk).

For clarity, this Order does not prohibit any otherwise lawful activity but instead requires the use of face coverings indoors to the maximum extent possible.

- b. All businesses and governmental entities must enforce this face covering requirement for all personnel and for all customers or members of the public entering their facilities, regardless of vaccination status. All businesses and governmental entities must post clearly visible and easy-to-read signage at all entry points for indoor settings to communicate the face covering requirements to all persons entering the facility. In addition, those responsible for indoor public settings are strongly encouraged to provide face coverings at no cost to individuals who do not have one upon entry.
5. **Getting Vaccinated Is the Best Way to Reduce Risk.** Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is the best way to protect the vaccinated person from infection, hospitalization, or death from COVID-19, as well as to prevent harm to others by reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, all eligible persons are strongly urged to get vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible.

6. **Definitions.** For purposes of this Order, the following definitions apply:

- a. “Business” includes any for-profit, non-profit, or educational entity, whether a corporate entity, organization, partnership, or sole proprietorship, and regardless of the nature of the service, the function it performs, or its corporate or entity structure. For clarity, “business” also includes a for-profit, non-profit, or educational entity performing services or functions under contract with a governmental agency.
- b. “Face covering” means a face covering that is well-fitted to an individual and covers the nose and mouth especially while talking, consistent with the guidance of the CDPH

at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx>. A face covering does not include a scarf, ski mask, balaclava, bandana, turtleneck, collar, or single layer of fabric or any mask that has an unfiltered one-way exhaust valve.

- c. “Personnel” means the following individuals who provide goods or services or perform operations associated with a business or governmental entity in the County: employees; contractors and sub-contractors (such as those who sell goods or perform services onsite or who deliver goods for the business); independent contractors (such as “gig workers” who perform work via the business’s application or other online interface); vendors who are permitted to sell goods onsite; volunteers; and other individuals who regularly provide services onsite at the request of the business.
7. **Applicability.** All individuals, businesses, and other entities in the County are ordered to comply with the applicable provisions of this Order. For clarity, individuals who do not currently reside in the County must comply with all applicable requirements of the Order when they are in the County. Governmental entities must follow the requirements of this Order applicable to businesses, unless otherwise specifically directed by the Health Officer.
 8. **Obligation to Follow Stricter Order.** Where a conflict exists between this Order and any order issued by the State Public Health Officer, the Governor, or a State agency (such as the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA)) related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the most restrictive provision controls. For clarity, all individuals and entities must comply with the State Order, any mandatory guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health, any mandatory orders of the Governor or a State agency, or any other mandatory provision of State law to the extent it is stricter than any provision of this Order. Consistent with California Health and Safety Code section 131080 and the Health Officer Practice Guide for Communicable Disease Control in California, except if the State Health Officer issues an order expressly directed at this Order and based on a finding that a provision of this Order constitutes a menace to public health, any more restrictive measures in this Order continue to apply and control in this County. In addition, to the extent any federal guidelines are inconsistent with this Order, this Order is controlling.
 9. **Enforcement.** Pursuant to Government Code sections 26602 and 41601, and Health and Safety Code section 101029, the Health Officer requests that the Sheriff, all chiefs of police in the County, and all enforcement officers ensure compliance with and enforce this Order. The violation of any provision of this Order constitutes an imminent threat and menace to public health, constitutes a public nuisance, and is punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.
 10. **Copies.** Copies of this Order shall promptly be: (1) made available at the County offices at 701 Ocean St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (2) posted on the County Public Health Department website (www.santacruzhealthservices.org); and (3) provided to any member of the public requesting a copy of this Order.

11. **Severability.** If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.

IT IS SO ORDERED:


Gail Newel, MD
Health Officer of the County of Santa Cruz

8-19-21
Dated: August 19, 2021

Approved as to Form:

Office of the County Counsel