

City of College Station
Mayoral Order to Mandate Face Coverings – FAQ
Updated July 23, 2020

On June 25, 2020, College Station Mayor Karl Mooney issued Mayoral Order Number Three Mandating Face Coverings for Commercial Entities due to the evolving public health emergency related to the coronavirus pandemic. This Order requires College Station businesses to adopt a Health and Safety Policy to include that every employee or visitor to the commercial entity's business premises or other facilities wear a face covering over their nose and mouth, according to the CDC guidelines, when social distancing is not feasible. The College Station City Council consented to and approved this order on July 9, 2020, and the order will continue until terminated by the City Council or until the Local State of Disaster is terminated, whichever occurs earlier.

Key Takeaways:

- In effect from 6 a.m. Monday, June 29, 2020, until terminated by the City Council; or, until the Local State of Disaster is terminated (whichever occurs earlier)
- Applies to all commercial entities providing goods and services
- Adopted Health and Safety Policy must be posted in a conspicuous location
- In all commercial establishments, employees, patrons, and visitors age 10 and older must wear a face covering
- In public places, people age 10 and older must wear a face covering where social distancing is difficult

Exceptions to Wearing a Face Covering:

- Face coverings need not be worn when:
 - Exercising outside or engaging in physical activity outside
 - Driving alone or with passengers who are part of the same household as the driver
 - When doing so poses a greater mental or physical health, safety, or security risk
 - While pumping gas or operating outdoor equipment
 - While in a building or activity that requires security surveillance or screening (like banks, for example)
 - When consuming food and drink

Please review the following FAQs, and the Order itself, for further direction. The easiest way to find what you're looking for is by typing a word of interest into the search function (keyboard shortcut: CTRL+F). With your help, we can reduce the likelihood of transmission from person to person and slow the spread of the virus, and in doing so reduce the burden on our local health care systems and protect the lives of the most vulnerable among us.



GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ORDER

Why did the Mayor issue this order?

It is important to the Mayor that every avenue be exhausted in order to avoid any additional shelter in place orders.

Cases had continued to rise in Brazos County and resulted more frequently from spread within the community. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the cases during the week of June 13th were a result of community spread, and 46% were in the 18- to 24-year-old age group. Brazos County's positivity rate – the number of positive COVID-19 tests compared to the total number – for that week was 24.39%, the highest positivity rate to date.

How long does the order last?

The Mayor's order was to last until 11:59 p.m. Friday July 10, 2020. On July 9, 2020, the College Station City Council extended the order. It remains in effect until the earlier of Council's termination of the order, or termination of the Local State of Disaster.

How can a business be compliant with the order to wear face coverings?

1. Businesses must adopt a Health and Safety Policy as described in the order. At a minimum, the policy must require all employees and visitors wear a face covering in your business when you cannot ensure sufficient social/physical distancing (6 feet between persons from different households)
2. You must notify your employees and visitors of the policy by posting signage in a conspicuous location (for example, at the entrance to the business, in employee breakrooms, at job sites, and at points of sale).
TEMPLATE SIGNS FOR PRINT HERE: [cstx.gov/covid19](https://www.cstx.gov/covid19)
3. You must implement the policy by:
 - a. Notifying your employees and visitors of the policy;
 - b. Requiring your employees to wear a face covering while at work when maintaining sufficient physical distance from another person is impossible or unlikely; and
 - c. Requiring visitors to wear a face covering when visiting your business or facilities.

Does the Health and Safety Policy have to be in a specific form?

No, there is not a required form so long as the policy is clear, and it meets the minimum requirements contained in the order. The City recognizes that not all commercial entities are alike; therefore, the posting of this policy attempts to remain flexible. Included in the order is an example Health and Safety Policy that you may use.

Are churches and other places of worship included in this order?

No, churches and other places of worship are not commercial entities. However, the City strongly encourages churches to consider face coverings and other protective measures, including social distancing, sanitizing, and frequent hand-washing.



FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

Which order should I follow? Governor Abbott's or the mayor's?

The answer is both. Mayor Mooney's order supplements Governor Abbott's current executive orders. The mayor's order does not replace any order, direction or guideline put in place by Governor Abbott.

I do not know how to write a policy. Do you have a template I can use?

The City has prepared a downloadable template which you may use. Posting the template in a conspicuous location and implementing the face covering requirement for your business is sufficient to meet the requirements of the order. Please keep in mind that you may still need to customize your Health and Safety Policy to include additional measures specific to your business. Please remember to post your Health and Safety Policy in as prominent a location as possible, such as the front door or window.

If I own a restaurant, do my employees have to wear a mask?

The short answer is yes. At a minimum, the Health and Safety Policy developed as a result of the order should require your employees to wear masks when working alongside other employees, providing services to the general public, or if they are not able to maintain social distancing of 6 feet or more.

I am a dentist. Do I need to require patients to wear a mask?

Yes. All employees and visitors should wear a mask when entering the office. However, patients receiving medical services may remove their mask when necessary during procedures so long as the health care provider takes appropriate safety precautions. Please ensure that all employees and medical staff are wearing a mask and appropriate protective equipment when administering medical services.

What do I do if customers do not want to comply?

If a business has made every effort to comply with the order and the customer still refuses to wear a face covering, the business should not put their employees in a situation that creates additional conflict. Businesses can use their discretion based on space and distancing capabilities. The business may also ask the person to leave the premises.

FOR INDIVIDUALS

Are individuals still required to wear masks and practice social distancing?

Individuals are required to wear masks and practice social distancing when they are in public. Starting Monday, June 29, 2020, all commercial entities in College Station were to require visitors to wear a mask in order to enter their business premises and receive services. On July 2, 2020, Governor Abbott issued GA-29, which requires all individuals to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when inside a commercial entity or other building or space open to the public, or when in an outdoor public space, wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household.



Are there exemptions to the Governor's GA-29 Order?

Yes. The face-covering requirement does not apply to the following:

- Any person younger than 10 years of age
- Any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering
- Any person while the person is consuming food or drink, or is seated at a restaurant to eat or drink
- Any person while the person is (a) exercising outdoors or engaging in physical activity outdoors, and (b) maintaining a safe distance from other people not in the same household
- Any person while the person is driving alone or with passengers who are part of the same household as the driver
- Any person obtaining a service that requires temporary removal of the face covering for security surveillance, screening, or a need for specific access to the face, such as while obtaining a personal-care service involving the face, but only to the extent necessary for the temporary removal
- Any person while the person is in a swimming pool, lake, or similar body of water
- Any person who is voting, assisting a voter, serving as a poll watcher, or actively administering an election, but wearing a face covering is strongly encouraged
- Any person who is actively providing or obtaining access to religious worship, but wearing a face covering is strongly encouraged
- Any person while the person is giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience
- Any person in a county (a) that meets the requisite criteria promulgated by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) regarding minimal cases of COVID-19, and (b) whose county judge has affirmatively opted-out of this face-covering requirement by filing with TDEM the required face-covering attestation form – provided, however, that wearing a face covering is highly recommended, and every county is strongly encouraged to follow these face-covering standards

Should I still practice social distancing while exercising outdoors?

Yes, keeping a distance of at least 6 feet from others while engaging in physical activities, even when outdoors, reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Do I need to wear a mask when I go to a restaurant?

Yes, a mask is required when entering a restaurant. When you are sitting at the table and/or eating or drinking, you may remove your mask. However, when getting up to visit the restroom or leaving the restaurant, you will be required to put your mask back on.

Are there helpful tips for wearing face coverings/masks?

Cloth face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortable against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage or change to shape



Do I have to wear a mask if I have a medical condition?

You do not have to wear a face covering if it poses a greater mental or physical health, safety, or security risk.

However, the CDC reminds the public that [recent studies](#) show that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity – for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing – even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms.

What about a penalty?

With the issuance of GA-29, the Governor’s Executive Order GA-28 was amended to delete the phrase, “but no jurisdiction can impose a civil or criminal penalty for failure to wear a face covering.”

Following a verbal or written warning for a first-time violator of the face-covering requirement (per the Governor’s Order), a person’s second violation shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed \$250. Each subsequent violation shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed \$250 per violation.

The order prohibits confinement in jail as a penalty for the violation of any face-covering order by any jurisdiction.