



**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:
MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ORDINANCE EO 2021-3
ISSUED OCTOBER 12, 2021**

WHY MASK?

- The rapid increase in community transmission of COVID-19 and increased hospitalizations have resulted in an insufficiency of healthcare system capacity at local hospitals substantial enough to endanger the public health, safety or welfare.
- The CDC recommends wearing a mask indoors, regardless of vaccination status, in public if in an area of substantial or high transmission, to maximize protection from the Delta variant of the virus that causes COVID-19.

WHAT KIND OF MASKS ARE ACCEPTABLE?

- Medical grade masks or cloth, polypropylene, paper or other face coverings.
- Masks or face coverings should rest snugly above the nose, below the mouth, and on the sides of the face; N95 masks are recommended.
- The following are not face coverings because they allow droplets to be released: a covering that incorporates a valve that is designed to facilitate easy exhalation, mesh masks, lace masks or other coverings with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents.

WHEN DO I NEED TO MASK?

- All individuals must wear masks or face coverings over their noses and mouths when they are indoors in areas which are open to the public or which are communal spaces shared with other individuals not from one's household.
 - Exemptions exist for cases such as children under the age of five, individuals who cannot tolerate a mask due to a physical or mental disability, and religious assemblies. See below for the full list.
- Businesses may choose to allow individuals who request an accommodation under the ADA to wear a face shield or accommodate these individuals through alternate means, such as curbside, delivery, or telephonic service.

Read the full text of the Emergency Ordinance at: www.Muni.org/Assembly

ARE THERE EXEMPTIONS?

- Face shields may be permitted in lieu of a mask or face covering for the following individuals, who must wear a face shield whenever a face covering would be required unless it is impossible to do so:
 - Any individual who cannot tolerate a mask due to a physical or mental disability; the individual's or guardian's statement that they are exempt is sufficient evidence;
 - Individuals who are communicating with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing;
 - Individuals performing an activity that cannot be conducted or safely conducted while wearing a mask (for example, a driver experiencing foggy glasses, a dental patient receiving care, an equipment operator where there is a risk of dangerous entanglement).
- The requirements of this ordinance do not apply to the following categories of businesses, people, or activities:
 - Any child under the age of 5 years but face coverings are recommended for children over 2 years of age.
 - Individuals who are incarcerated, in police custody, or inside a courtroom; these individuals should follow guidance particular to their location or institution.
 - Presenters, musicians, others communicating to an audience or being recorded, if they are 10 feet from the audience and all members of the audience are wearing face coverings.
 - Individuals removing their face coverings to eat, drink, or briefly scratch an itch.
 - Employees within their own fully enclosed office or workspace or within an unenclosed workspace if they are totally alone.
 - Fully vaccinated employees working in a separate room from the public and unvaccinated coworkers. Employees wishing to utilize this exception must be able to show evidence to their employer that all employees in the separate room are vaccinated in a manner consistent with workplace anti-discrimination laws.
 - Individuals performing an activity that cannot be conducted or safely conducted while wearing a face covering,
 - Individuals who cannot tolerate a face covering due to physical or mental disability. The individual's or a guardian's statement that they are exempted is sufficient evidence.
 - All athletic activities when a person is actively engaged in that activity. Indoor gyms, fitness centers, boutique fitness clubs, and other businesses or entities, including the school district, may require face coverings regardless of this exemption. This exemption does not apply to spectators not engaged in athletic activity.
 - Religious Assemblies.
 - The Mayor and his executive team.

HOW IS THIS ENFORCED?

- Businesses, employers, and building owners shall deny admittance to any individual who fails to comply with this Emergency Ordinance, as long as the regulation is applied in a manner consistent with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and any other applicable provision of law.
- Employers must make sure employees who are present in the workplace have access to and wear masks or face coverings when required.
- The Municipality reserves the right to use all available enforcement options to assure compliance with this Emergency Ordinance. Violation of this Ordinance does not create grounds for residents to harass individuals who do not comply with it.

HOW LONG ARE THESE RECOMMENDATIONS IN EFFECT?

- The Emergency Order goes into effect immediately and expires when Anchorage has reached a point of sufficient medical capacity or no later than 60 days without further action by the Assembly.
- The public health emergency does not end until either (1) crisis standards of care are ended at two of three local hospitals for 14 consecutive days; or (2) there is no longer substantial or high community transmission per the CDC for 14 consecutive days.
- When the Municipality of Anchorage is experiencing a public health emergency, the requirements of this ordinance shall be in effect.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO STAY SAFE AND PROTECT MY LOVED ONES?

- In addition to masks, the Assembly strongly encourage all individuals to follow the CDC recommendations for communities with substantial or high rates of community transmission, as well as:
 - Vaccinations for those residents who are eligible
 - Observance of physical distancing, limiting gatherings, and avoiding crowds
 - Basic public health measures such as staying home when sick, handwashing, and regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces

Read the full text of the Emergency Ordinance at: www.Muni.org/Assembly