



# San Juan County

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Health Officer Order on Face Coverings

### Where do I find the order, and what exactly does it say?

The order is online at : <https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/20392/200515-Health-Officer-Order-4>. Here is a summary of the order:

The Health Officer's most recent order is focused on preventing the spread of COVID-19 indoors at businesses and other public indoor spaces. The order has three parts:

1. As of May 23<sup>rd</sup>, when the County entered Phase II of the Governor's Safe Start Plan **customers or other visitors may not enter or remain inside a business unless they are wearing cloth face coverings, even if they are unable to wear or remove a face mask**. This applies only indoors, not in outdoor spaces. The only exception is for people who are eating or drinking at a restaurant, tavern, or bar. Business owners and operators are responsible for enforcing this rule. Only those able and willing to wear masks will be allowed in businesses once the full order takes effect, even if they are unable to wear or remove a face mask as described in #1 above.

Because all people need a way to get food, medicine, and medical supplies, even if they are unable or unwilling to wear a mask, businesses that sell these items and are open must provide a way for customers to purchase these items without entering a building, such as curbside pick-up or delivery. Many local businesses are already offering these services. Face coverings can be as simple as two layers of cloth covering the nose and mouth, such as a bandana or scarf worn in accordance with CDC recommendations.

2. The third part of the order requires ports, marinas, and businesses open to the public to **post signs** stating that cloth face coverings are required inside businesses in San Juan County.

### When did San Juan County move to Phase 2?

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

### What does the order NOT do?

- It does not eliminate the need to practice social distancing, wash hands frequently, and avoiding touching of the face.
- It does not require employees to wear face coverings at work. Employee face covering requirements are established by the Governor.

- It does not require anyone to wear surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Surgical masks and respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for health care workers, first responders, and others who need them.

### **What exactly is a face covering?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define cloth face coverings as fabric coverings including cloth face masks, scarves and bandana coverings, or any homemade face covering made of cotton fabric. The CDC also makes clear that cloth face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably 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
- You can find [more information on the CDC's website](#).

Remember that surgical masks and N-95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for health care workers, medical first responders, and other workers as recommended by CDC guidance. Such items should not be worn as cloth face coverings by the general public unless necessary.

### **How exactly do face coverings help prevent the spread of COVID-19?**

Facial coverings do not replace proper hygiene or social distancing, which are by far the best methods of protection. A cloth face covering does protect others and slow community spread of COVID-19 by blocking infectious droplets from spreading when someone with the infection speaks, coughs or sneezes. A key transmission method for the COVID-19 virus is through respiratory droplets, and growing evidence suggests that a significant number of infections are transmitted by asymptomatic people who are expelling those infectious droplets.

### **Is anyone exempt from the Order to wear face coverings before entering a business or other public indoor space?**

No one will be allowed to enter a business or other indoor public space without a face covering. Note that businesses providing food, medicine, and medical supplies are required to provide curbside pick-up or delivery to customers.

Note that this order does not require employees of businesses to cover their faces as employee face covering requirements are established by the Governor.

### **When is a face covering not required?**

In San Juan County, face coverings are not required to be worn:

- At home
- In your car alone or if you're only with members of your household

- Outdoors, though please note that wearing a face covering when outdoors where social distancing cannot be maintained is strongly recommended.

It is recommended to have a face covering with you and ready to use when in public for times when maintaining physical distancing is not possible.

### **If I don't currently have a mask or face covering, where do I get one?**

First off, scarves and bandanas are acceptable face coverings. The [CDC also has good guidance](#) on how to make your own, both for those who sew and those who don't (scroll down to bottom of page). There are a number of local efforts to produce and distribute locally made masks. If you cannot find a mask, contact San Juan County Health & Community Services at 360-370-7400. They have a small supply on hand and are actively working to secure more.

### **So, if I see someone in a business or other indoor public space without a mask on, what should I do?**

Please use common sense, empathy, and thoughtfulness when seeing someone without a mask. For situations where a genuine concern has arisen about someone's willingness to follow this order, please contact the San Juan County Sheriff's Office hotline at **360-370-7609** or by email at [covid-19tipshotline@sanjuanco.com](mailto:covid-19tipshotline@sanjuanco.com). Please note that education will always be the preferred means of resolution, rather than penalties.

### **What is the penalty for not wearing a face covering?**

It is up to everyone in San Juan County to help follow public health guidance to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the islands. The sincere hope is that this can be achieved without the need for enforcement or penalties. We need to be accountable to each other, to our most vulnerable community members, and to our first responders and health care workers who are on the frontlines of this crisis. However, any violation of this order that is a misdemeanor punishable by fine and arrest and imprisonment up to 90 days pursuant to [RCW 70.05.120](#).

This primary goal of the Order is to educate, encourage, and persuade individuals to wear face coverings.

### **I'm worried about visitors to the islands and them not covering their faces, what do we do?**

The first step is to model good behavior. If visitors see residents and employees of businesses broadly respecting this order, they are more likely to follow suit. In addition, we have produced signage that local businesses can use to inform customers about the requirements to cover our faces before entering. These posters are available at [www.sjccovid.com/facecoverings](http://www.sjccovid.com/facecoverings).

### **Won't this requirement hurt businesses?**

The main goal with this order is to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community. This is something we have been very successful at doing to date, and we want to hold on to those gains. Keeping safe is the best way for us to ensure the ability of our community to continue to restore the

local economy. We don't want to go backwards, so taking this step is a vital piece of ensuring our continued progress in fighting this illness. Remember, keeping safe = keeping open.

**How long do I need to wear a face covering?**

You should wear a cloth face covering for the entire duration of the time you're in a public indoor setting.

**When will this Order expire?**

The Order shall remain in effect until further Order of the County Health Officer following a determination that the wearing of cloth face coverings is no longer necessary