Frequently Asked Questions about Face Coverings

Is the State and Local Order a recommendation?

The State and Local Orders are requirements where they apply, and not just recommended. All guidance documents released by the state of California related to COVID-19 fall under the statewide Stay-at-Home order and must be followed by all businesses, residents, and travelers.

Local Health Officer Orders are applicable throughout Santa Barbara County.

How does wearing a facial covering help?

Face coverings reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, sneezes, sings, and breathes including someone who has COVID-19 but does not feel ill. Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for maintaining physical distancing, washing hands, and staying home if one feels ill, but are helpful when combined with these primary interventions.

Are facial coverings required at all times?

No. Facial coverings are required to be worn indoors or in line to enter any indoor public building or space that is not a private home. Facial coverings do not need to be worn when in a private home. When outdoors, facial coverings should be worn when people who are not from the same household are unable to maintain a distance of at least six feet from each other.

What is considered a public building or space?

Any space that is not a private home is considered a public building or public space. This includes restaurants, retail shops, churches, hair and nail salons, fitness centers, museums, parks, etc.

If I can maintain 6 feet of distance from others, do I need to wear a facial covering?

If you are waiting to enter or are in any public building or public space, you must wear a facial covering. Facial coverings must be worn waiting for or riding on public transportation. If you are outside engaging in recreation and can maintain at least six feet of distance from those who do not live with you, you do not need to wear a facial covering.

Are children required to wear facial coverings?

It is not recommended that children under the age of two should wear a facial covering because of the risk of suffocation. Older children should wear facial coverings when in public indoor locations or outdoors when physical distancing is difficult or not possible.

Do I need to wear a facial covering outside?

It depends on circumstances. Facial coverings must be worn when in outdoor public spaces when maintaining a physical distance of at least six feet from people who are not members of the same household is not feasible.
Do I have to wear a facial covering at work?

In most workplace settings, you must wear face coverings. Facial coverings must be worn while working, whether in a workplace setting or performing work off-site, when:

- Interacting in-person with co-workers, supervisors, or the public
- Working in any space visited by members of the public, regardless of whether anyone from the public is present at the time
- Working in a space where food or beverages are prepared, packaged for sale, or distribution to others
- Working in or passing through common areas including hallways, stairways, elevators, and parking facilities
- In any room or enclosed area where other people (except for members of the person's own household or residence) are present and maintaining physical distance is difficult or unfeasible

Do I need to wear a facial covering inside a restaurant?

While waiting to be seated, you must continue to wear a facial covering. You may remove your face covering once seated and eating or drinking, provided you are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet away from other groups and those who do not live in your immediate household.

Do food, beverage, and restaurant service staff need to wear facial coverings?

All food service, restaurant, breweries, wineries staff and patrons must wear facial coverings.

Are face coverings required in gyms and fitness centers?

At a time when indoor gyms and fitness centers are permitted to open, facial coverings are required for patrons and employees. Face coverings should be worn at all times in the fitness center or gym, except when in a shower or pool. Face Coverings are not necessary if exercising outside and those participating are able to maintain six feet of distance at all times.

Do I need to wear a facial covering during participation in faith-based activities? Can I take my facial covering off when I get inside?

At a time when indoor faith-based services are permissible in Santa Barbara County, all in attendance will be required to wear facial coverings while indoors. Facial coverings are not necessary for remote services where attendees are in their private residences, or in outdoor or drive-in settings where physical distancing can be maintained and there is no close contact between members of different households.

If everyone wears face coverings, are gatherings allowed?

No, private gatherings of more than 10 people are not permitted at this time.

Are businesses allowed to refuse entrance to someone not wearing a face covering?

Yes, a business may refuse entrance to those not wearing a face covering. If a patron refuses to wear a mask and refuses to leave, law enforcement can be called.
**What if a business refuses to enforce face covering requirements?**

Failure to comply with the order can result in an administrative fine or temporary restraining order. If complaints are received about business not requiring employees or customers to wear facial coverings, the county will reach out to the business owner or manager to provide education about the state and local orders. If the issue continues, citations or a temporary restraining orders may be issued.

**If I own a business, what should I do if someone enters my building and refuses to wear a face covering?**

Businesses and organizations must place signage at entrances to their space noting that face coverings are required. If someone entering refuses to wear a facial covering for a non-medical reason or behaves towards you in an aggressive manner, businesses owners may reach out to local law enforcement for assistance.

**What is required for those who have a medical condition preventing them from wearing face coverings?**

Those who have health issues making them unable to tolerate a facial covering, do not need to wear one under the state order. You are not required tell a business what your medical condition is. Individuals with these types of health condition may also be at increased risk for negative health outcomes if they contract COVID-19 and should exercise caution.

**Is there a way I can provide feedback regarding large crowds or businesses with employees or large numbers of customers not wearing facial coverings?**

Yes. The County of Santa Barbara has an online form to provide feedback about concerns. The County will reach out to help educate business owners or organizations about safety compliance and may follow up with additional measures for repeated non-compliance.

Santa Barbara County COVID-19 Compliance Concerns Form

**Where can I get a face covering?**

Many local and online retail sources offer low-cost face covering options. Those unable to afford a face covering may reach acquire one free-of-charge at the following locations:

- Santa Barbara County Administration Building lobby: 105 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara
- Santa Barbara Health Care Center: 345 Camino del Remedio, Santa Barbara
- Santa Maria Health Care Center, 2115 Centerpointe Parkway, Santa Maria

The Santa Barbara County Health Officer requests cities within the County of Santa Barbara provide face coverings free-of-charge to those who cannot afford them.

**Where can I get more information on the facial covering order?**

The State order can be viewed [here](#)

Santa Barbara County’s Face Covering Order can be viewed [here](#)

If you have questions about the facial covering order, please contact the County Call Center at (833) 688-5551.