

## To Protect Public Health, County Requires Face Coverings While Offering Free Face Coverings for Pickup

Tuesday, June 23, 2020 |

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To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and protect the public health of our community, Leon County approved an emergency ordinance requiring face coverings scheduled to begin Thursday, June 25 at 12:01 a.m. As confirmed cases of COVID-19 continue to rise locally and statewide, the ordinance states that an individual in a business establishment in Leon County must wear a face covering while in that business establishment.

A business establishment means a location with a roof overhead under which any business is conducted, goods are made or stored or processed or where services are rendered. The term “business establishment” also includes locations where non-profit, governmental, churches and quasi-governmental entities facilitate public interactions and conduct business. Also, as part of the requirement, all businesses must post a notice visible to all customers that face coverings are required while indoors. An example sign has been attached to this news release.

Facial coverings are not required to be worn by the following persons:

- Persons under the age of six years;
- Persons who have trouble breathing due to a chronic pre-existing condition or individuals with a documented or demonstrable medical problem. It is the intent of this provision that those individuals who cannot tolerate a facial covering for a medical, sensory, or any other condition which makes it difficult for them to utilize a facial covering and function in public are not required to wear one;
- Persons in their private rooms of a lodging establishment, such as a hotel, motel, or vacation rental—however, face coverings must be worn in all indoor commons areas of said establishment;
- Persons exercising while observing at least six feet of distancing from another person;
- Restaurant and bar patrons eating or drinking;
- Business owners, managers, and employees who are in an area of a business establishment that is not open to customers, patrons, or the public, provided that six feet of distance exists between persons.

“In just the past five days, Leon County has seen a dramatic rise in coronavirus cases, and we all have a role in stopping the continued spread,” said Leon County Commission Chairman Bryan Desloge. “While requiring face masks may inconvenience some, it will protect many more. I am proud of the Board’s decision today to safeguard our whole community, drive down infections, and save lives.”

The ordinance will remain in place until repealed. A copy of the ordinance and frequently asked questions will be posted to the Leon County Emergency Information Portal at [www.LeonCountyFL.gov/ei](http://www.LeonCountyFL.gov/ei).

“The science is clear and public health experts agree—the coronavirus spreads quickly indoors and face coverings are one of the most effective ways to limit that transmission,” said Leon County Administrator Vincent S. Long. “The ordinance reflects where we are today in responding to this pandemic, and we will continue to exercise every possible mitigation strategy in the future to keep our community safe.”

The ordinance does not require persons to wear face coverings while outdoors. However, the County still does strongly encourage residents to wear face coverings when unable to socially distance.

Both the Centers for Disease Control and the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) recommend individuals use a cloth face covering in addition to practicing social distancing and frequent hand washing to help stop the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Cloth face coverings provide an extra layer to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling in the air and onto other people.

“Asymptomatic infected individuals can release infectious aerosol particles while breathing and speaking,” said Florida Medical Association President Ronald L. Giffler, MD, JD, MBA in an earlier statement on face coverings. “Not wearing a mask or face covering increases exposure, whereas universal masking greatly reduces the spread of viral particles. The message is simple: For the sake of your health and the health of everyone around you, Florida’s doctors want you to wear a mask.”

#### Distribution of Free Cloth Face Coverings at County Libraries

Starting Wednesday, June 24, Leon County will make thousands of free face coverings available for pickup at all County library locations during regular hours, listed below. Individuals may request one covering and may also pick up one covering for each immediate family

member.

- Main Library (200 West Park Avenue)
- Dr. B.L. Perry, JR. Branch Library (2817 South Adams Street)
- Eastside Branch Library (1583 Pedrick Road)
- Jane G. Sauls Fort Braden Branch Library (16327 Blountstown Highway)
- Lake Jackson Branch Library (3840 North Monroe Street)
- Northeast Branch Library (5513 Thomasville Road)
- Woodville Branch Library (8000 Old Woodville Road)

All County branch libraries are open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. The County main library is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. These additional masks complement the County's ongoing efforts to distribute cloth face masks at faith-based organizations in southern Leon County, at the FAMU-Bond COVID-19 testing site at Bragg Memorial Stadium and at FDOH's mobile testing sites throughout the community.

For additional information on COVID-19, the Florida Department of Health has activated a 24/7 COVID-19 call center at (866) 779-6121. Leon County residents can also call the County Health Department at (850) 404-6300, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Also, the best resource for Florida-specific COVID-19 information remains the following FDOH website: [www.FLHealth.gov/COVID-19](http://www.FLHealth.gov/COVID-19).

Significant updates can always be found updated real-time at [www.LeonCountyFL.gov/ei](http://www.LeonCountyFL.gov/ei). The County Emergency Information Portal has the most up-to-date and timely critical information right from the Emergency Operations Center.

For more information contact Mathieu Cavell, Community and Media Relations, at [CMR@LeonCountyFL.gov](mailto:CMR@LeonCountyFL.gov) or (850) 606-5300.

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- [Leon County Face Covering FAQ FINAL.pdf](#)
- [Masks Required Sign.pdf](#)



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