



Frequently Asked Questions - Leon County Requires Face Coverings

When will this requirement take effect?

Thursday, June 25 at 12:01 a.m.

Who is required to wear a face covering?

Any 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” includes transportation network companies, such as Ubers and Lyft, vehicles operated for mass transit, taxis, limousines for hire, rental cars, and other passenger vehicles for hire. The term “business establishment” includes locations where non-profit, governmental, and quasi-governmental entities facilitate public interactions and conduct business. The term “business establishment” also includes places of worship.

However, there are exceptions to the face covering requirement.

What are the exceptions to the face covering requirement?

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

- A child under the age of 6;
- 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;
- Public safety, fire, and other life safety and health care personnel, as their personal protective equipment requirements will be governed by their respective agencies;
- Persons exercising while observing at least six feet of distancing from another person;
- Restaurant and bar patrons eating or drinking. It is the intent of this provision that a face covering will be worn while traversing a business establishment for ingress and egress, to use the facilities, and while otherwise standing when persons are unable to maintain at least 6 feet of distancing;
- 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. This exception does not apply to employees who are present in the kitchen or other food and beverage preparation area of a business establishment;

- An individual in a lodging establishment who is inside of the lodging unit, including, but not limited to, a hotel room, motel room, vacation rental unit, timeshare unit, or similar unit;

Where are face coverings required?

In a business establishment as defined above.

Does the requirement include all of Leon County?

Yes. The ordinance requiring face coverings is intended to have countywide application. The City of Tallahassee, the State University System, State College System, the State of Florida, or Federal agencies may adopt more stringent rules and procedures.

Is a business required to post that face coverings are required while indoors?

Yes. All businesses must post a notice visible to all customers that face coverings are required while indoors. Signage is available [HERE](#).

Is a business required to enforce the emergency order?

No. Local law enforcement is responsible for enforcing the Emergency Ordinance.

What is considered a face covering?

A “face covering” is a material that covers the nose and mouth and that fits snugly against the sides of the face so there are no gaps. It can be secured to the head with ties or straps or simply wrapped around the lower face. It can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton, silk, or linen. Coverings with materials made of multiple layers is highly encouraged. A cloth face covering may be factory-made or sewn by hand, or the cloth face covering can be improvised from household items. The CDC has posted additional information regarding how to make, wear, and wash a cloth face covering [HERE](#).

What if I don't have a face covering?

Homemade coverings, bandanas, scarves and neck gaiters are all OK. The CDC has provided simple steps for making a cloth face covering with everyday items from your home that can be found [here](#). A video showing how to make a cloth face covering can be found [here](#).

Cloth face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
- Be secured with ties or ear loops.
- Be made of more than one layer of fabric that you can still breathe through.
- Be able to be washed and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

Cloth face coverings should be washed after each use. It is important to always [remove face coverings correctly](#) and [wash your hands](#) after handling or touching a used face covering. Follow the CDC's guidance on [how to properly wash cloth face coverings](#).

Is Leon County distributing face coverings to residents?

Yes. 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 Saturday. 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.

How well do cloth face coverings work to prevent spread of COVID-19?

Health experts agree that face coverings can be very effective at preventing the spread of COVID-19. The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

The primary role of the use of face coverings is to reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes, including someone who has COVID-19 but feels well. Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing, washing hands, and staying home when ill, but they may be helpful when combined with these primary interventions.

Are face coverings required on mass transit and in rideshares Uber/Lyft/taxis?

Yes.

Are face coverings required in churches?

Yes, if the service is conducted indoors and under a roof.

How will this order be enforced?

Local law enforcement is responsible for enforcing the Emergency Ordinance. The intent of the requirement is to allow the community to resume normal activities while also preventing the further spread of COVID-19. However, any person violating this face covering requirement may receive a noncriminal infraction. A violation does not authorize the search or arrest of any individual. Prior to issuing

any citation, the individual will be asked to comply with the order or be able to explain how they are exempt. The first violation of the requirement is through a fine of \$50. The second violation would be a fine of \$125. All subsequent violations would be a fine up to \$250.

What should I do if I see someone without a face covering?

For your own safety, do not confront individuals without face coverings. Stay 6 feet away from people who are not wearing face coverings. If someone is not wearing a face covering, please consider that the individual may have a valid reason, including concerns for their own safety. Others may have breathing problems or health issues you do not know about. People who cannot wear a cloth face covering are not required to show proof of their medical condition nor are they required to name their medical condition.

How long will the face covering requirement remain in effect?

Until repealed.

Does the ordinance apply to organizations that provide shared housing?

The face covering requirement only applies to a business establishment or lodging establishment (see definitions below).

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” includes transportation network companies, such as Ubers and Lyft, vehicles operated for mass transit, taxis, jitneys, limousines for hire, rental cars, and other passenger vehicles for hire. The term “business establishment” includes locations where non-profit, governmental, and quasi-governmental entities facilitate public interactions and conduct business. The term “business establishment” also includes places of worship.

A “lodging establishment” shall have the same meaning as the term “transient public lodging establishment” has in section 509.013(4)(a)1, Florida Statutes (2019). Accordingly, for purposes of this Emergency Ordinance, a “lodging establishment” means any unit, group of units, dwelling, building, or group of buildings within a single complex of buildings which is rented to guests more than three times in a calendar year for periods of less than 30 days or 1 calendar month, whichever is less, or which is advertised or held out to the public as a place regularly rented to guests.

What authority does the Commission have to require face coverings?

Leon County is a charter county. Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 1(g) of the Florida Constitution:

(g) CHARTER GOVERNMENT. Counties operating under county charters shall have all powers of local self-government not inconsistent with general law, or with special law approved by vote of the electors. The governing body of a county operating under a charter may enact county ordinances not inconsistent with general law. The charter shall provide which shall prevail in the event of conflict between county and municipal ordinances.

The County also has authority under Chapter 125, Florida Statutes.

Why does the county's emergency ordinance require face coverings in indoor spaces?

Face coverings are required in these instances as public health experts have identified indoor activities are especially at risk. In general, the more closely a person interacts with others and the longer the interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.

Epidemiologists also point to mitigating the “three Cs” of transmission: closed spaces with poor ventilation, crowded settings, and close contact with others. That means encouraging outdoor seating when possible and maximizing ventilation in any indoor settings, limiting the number of people inside rooms and buildings, and continuing to keep individuals spaced apart by at least six feet.

Are kids doing indoor sports required to wear masks while training?

No, if you are exercising while observing 6 feet of distancing from other persons you are not required to wear a mask.

Does this ordinance apply to child-care settings?

Yes. An individual in a business establishment must wear a face covering while in that business establishment. The ordinance exempts a child under the age of 6.

Can I wear a face shield instead of a face covering and be in compliance with the emergency ordinance?

No. The Centers for Disease Control do not recommend the use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. Specifically, the emergency ordinance says that face coverings must fit snugly around the nose and mouth and a face shield does not.

Does the emergency ordinance apply to public schools operated by the Leon County School Board?

No. The Leon County School Board has independent home rule powers related to, and responsibility for, the management, control, operation, administration, and supervision of all free public schools within the school district. To learn more about Leon County Schools’ response to COVID-19, [click here](#).

Does the emergency ordinance apply to private schools, laboratory research schools, charter schools, or other specialty schools?

Yes. All of the above mentioned schools must comply with the emergency ordinance.

