

# FLOYD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Floyd County Health Order Number 4-2020: Face Covering Mandate Extension

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to plague our community. However, we are seeing signs of decreasing rates. This week, the Governor has opened up more restrictions and moved to Stage 5. There is currently no vaccine to prevent the illness. Measures such as hand hygiene, facial coverings, and social distancing are the most effective strategies to reduce the spread from infected persons to noninfected persons. Therefore, to protect public health and simply save lives, restrictions must be extended to assist in the reduction of COVID-19 transmission, and avoid an increase in new cases.

With this understanding, **as the Floyd County Health Officer, I hereby order a facial covering mandate extension, pursuant to Indiana Code 16-20-1 et seq. and 16-41-9 et seq.** The order will remain in effect until midnight, 31 December 2020. The order may be extended depending on pandemic conditions.

Every individual must wear a facial covering over their nose and mouth when they are at:

- An indoor area open to the public including public transportation
- A private indoor or outdoor area where a social distance of six (6) feet from individuals outside their households cannot be maintained
- An outdoor public area where a social distance of six (6) feet from individuals outside their household cannot be maintained
- An enclosed public space or place of business.

A properly worn facial covering fully covers the individual's mouth and nose, fits snugly against the sides of the face with no gaps, is secured to prevent slipping, and allows for breathing with no restrictions. All face coverings that are not disposable should be washed each day before reuse. An adult should supervise the use of facial coverings by children age three (3)-twelve (12) to avoid misuse. The use of masks by all school-aged children continues to be very strongly recommended.

Exceptions to the policy include, but are not limited to:

- Any child age two (2) or less
- Any individual in respiratory distress
- Any individual who is hearing impaired and needs to remove facial coverings to communicate
- Any individual who has been advised, in writing, by a primary care provider that wearing a facial covering is detrimental to the individual's health
- Any individual who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the facial covering without assistance
- Any individual who is directed to remove a facial covering by a law enforcement officer
- Any employee engaged in work where a face covering would be deemed a hazard by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Any restaurant or bar customer while they are dining
- Any individual not in an area open to the public and where a social distance of six (6) feet can be maintained from non-household members [Ex. A single person private office]

The intent of this order is to continue to provide a safe environment for all people in Floyd County, whether engaged in work, social, or everyday activities, by extending the use of facial coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This will protect public health in Floyd County. Nothing in this order reduces or eliminates the requirements imposed by the executive orders by Governor Holcomb or orders from other regulating governmental agencies. This order is intended to be used to educate, encourage, and persuade people to wear facial coverings.

Citizens should continue to use frequent hand washing or sanitizing; maintain a minimum social distance of six (6) feet; avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands; and most importantly, stay home and isolate yourself if you are sick.

"Floyd County has seen improvement in the overall index rates of illness", notes Health Officer Dr. Tom Harris. "The index has dropped for the last 2 weeks from 8.9 to 5.1. However, the Floyd County Health Department has noted spikes in rates after reopening phases in the past; we hope to mitigate this by continuing the Mask Mandate until at least December 31st." The index had peaked at 20.9 in mid-April, and had dropped to 1.3 in late June.