



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***  
**SAN FRANCISCO ISSUES NEW POLICY ON**  
**FACE COVERINGS**

*New Health Order requires residents and workers to wear face coverings at essential businesses and in public facilities, on transit, and while performing essential work.*

*Rule helps the City prepare for future lifting of shelter in place.*

**San Francisco, CA** — Mayor London N. Breed and Director of Health Dr. Grant Colfax today announced that everyone in San Francisco will be required to wear face coverings when they are outside of their homes for essential needs, including waiting in line for or inside of a grocery store or on public transportation. Additionally, transportation workers and other employees who interact with the public must also cover their face while doing essential work. A full list of the requirements of the Health Order is listed below.

By strengthening this method of protection, San Franciscans will be less likely to transmit the coronavirus to one another. Face coverings help to stop droplets that may be infectious, even if the person wearing the mask has no or mild symptoms.

“Today’s Order is part of our broader strategy to protect public health and slow the spread of the coronavirus in our community,” said Mayor Breed. “By covering your face when you go pick up food or ride Muni, you are helping reduce the risk of infecting those around you. As we look to a time where we can begin to ease the Stay Home Order, we know that face coverings will be part of that future – and we want San Franciscans to become more comfortable with this new normal. We know it will take some time to get used to, but it will help save lives.”

The requirement is a Health Order by Dr. Tomás Aragón, Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco. The Order is effective at 11:59 p.m. on April 17, 2020, but it will not be enforced until 8:00 a.m. on April 22, 2020. It is informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Previously, the City recommended face coverings on April 2nd, and this order makes it a requirement.

“My mask protects you, and your mask protects me,” said Dr. Colfax. “Covering your face is a great way to show you care for your neighbors, friends and family. We are going to have to continue to work together to slow down the virus and reduce transmission. The virus is still out there, and we need to be vigilant.”



Wearing a face covering is not a substitute for staying home, staying 6 feet apart and frequent handwashing. These activities must be continued faithfully as part of the City's coronavirus response.

Face coverings should cover the nose and mouth and fit securely. They can be a manufactured or homemade mask, a bandanna, scarf, towel, neck gaiter or similar item. Cloth face coverings should be cleaned frequently with soap and water.

Face coverings do not need to be N-95 or surgical masks to help prevent the spread of the virus to others. Please refrain from buying hospital-grade masks so that those are available for health care workers and first responders.

Compliance is not anticipated to be an issue, as the vast majority of San Franciscans have been adhering to the Stay Home Order and social distancing. Many people already are wearing face coverings outside. However, the order does carry the force of law, and noncompliance is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.

#### **Summary of the new requirements**

- For the public, face coverings will be required:
  - While inside or waiting in line to enter an essential businesses, like a grocery store or pharmacy.
  - When seeking health care.
  - When waiting for or riding transit.
  - When entering facilities allowed to operate under the Stay Home Order (such as government buildings.)
- Businesses must:
  - Inform customers about the need to wear a face covering, including posting signs;
  - Take reasonable steps to keep people who are not wearing a face covering from entering their business, and
  - Refuse service to anyone not wearing a face covering.
- For essential workers and transportation workers:
  - All workers and volunteers at essential businesses, operating public transportation, or operating other types of shared transportation must wear a face covering when at work in most settings, when interacting with the public or co-workers.
  - Workers doing minimum basic operations, like security or payroll, essential infrastructure work, or government functions must wear a face covering when others are nearby or when they are in areas that the public regularly visits.
- Face coverings are **not required** to be worn when by people who are:
  - At home.
  - In their cars alone or with members of their household.



- Outdoors, walking, hiking, bicycling, or running. However, people are recommended to have a face covering with them and readily accessible when exercising, even if they're not wearing it at that moment.
- Children 12 years old or younger. Children age 2 and under must not wear a face covering due to the risk of suffocation. Children age 3 to 12 are not required to wear a face covering, but if they do, they should be supervised by an adult.

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