

# Emergency Order – Requiring Face Coverings FAQs

Updated 8/4/2020

## 1: When do I need to wear a face mask?

According to [Emergency Order #1](#), every individual, age five and older, shall wear a face covering if both of the following apply:

- a. The individual is indoors or in an enclosed space, other than at a private residence; and;
- b. Another person or persons who are not members of individual's household or living unit are present in the same room or enclosed space.

Face coverings are strongly recommended in all other settings, including outdoors when it is not possible to maintain physical distancing.

See the state's [Face Covering FAQs](#) for additional information.

## 2: When do I *not* need to wear a face mask?

You do not need to wear a face covering if:

- You are at a private residence;
- You are outside; or
- You are indoors and no one else is present.

You can also remove your face covering in the following situations:

- When you are eating or drinking.
- When you are communicating with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing and you cannot communicate while wearing a mask.
- While sleeping (e.g., nap times).
- While swimming or being on duty as a life guard.

## 3. Do the mask requirements apply to family child care providers who are providing care in their own home?

No, family child providers who provide care in their own home are not required to wear a mask; however, we do encourage providers to use them. Keep in mind, if your local government has stricter requirements, those requirements must be followed.

## 4. Since family child care providers providing care in their home don't need to wear a mask, do children 5 and older who attend that center need to wear a mask?

No, children attending a family child care center in a private residence do not need to wear a mask; however, we do encourage children 5 years and older to use them. Keep in mind, if your local government has stricter requirements, those requirements must be followed.

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## 5: Does this only apply to day camps when they are indoors?

Face coverings are required when people are indoors or in an enclosed space. The Governor's Order defines an enclosed space as a confined space open to the public when individuals congregate including but not limited to outdoor restaurants, taxis, public transit, ride-share vehicles, and **outdoor park structure**. Therefore, there may be times when a face covering would be required outside.

Face covering are strongly recommended if you are outdoor and it is not possible to maintain physical distancing. For example, if kids are close together in a clump outside, wear masks. If they are spread out and not coming into contact with each other (such as a nature walk staying 6 feet apart), they don't have to wear a mask. However, they should keep masks with them in case they come into closer contact.

Keep in mind that Day Camps (specifically the ones that are outside all day) will need to have masks for staff and campers when they are inside those enclosed spaces and on the buses.

## 6: Can child care centers take masks off when they are playing outdoors?

Generally, yes; however, the Governor's Order defines an enclosed space as a confined space open to the public when individuals congregate including but not limited to outdoor restaurants, taxis, public transit, ride-share vehicles, and **outdoor park structure**. Therefore, there may be times when a face covering would be required outside.

Face covering are strongly recommended if you are outdoor and it is not possible to maintain physical distancing. For example, if kids are close together in a clump outside, wear masks. If they are spread out and not coming into contact with each other (such as a nature walk staying 6 feet apart), they don't have to wear a mask. However, they should keep masks with them in case they come into closer contact.

## 7: What should a center do if children come without masks? If a center allows the children at the center without masks, could they get cited?

If a child does not have a medical reason to not wear a mask and is 5 years or older, the child must wear a mask indoors and in enclosed spaces. Centers should update their center policies to address the mandatory mask requirements and whether parents are required to supply the mask or if the center is providing them. If centers are requiring families to supply their own masks, centers can consider having a supply of disposable or reusable children's masks for situations when the family forgets the mask or does not supply one.

If a center is not complying with the mask order, education on the Order will be provided. If, following the technical assistance, the center chooses to ignore the Order, a citation

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may be issued. Much like other licensing rules regarding things children need to have (i.e. documentation, supply of clean clothing), the center is responsible for meeting the licensing rules.

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

Disposable and reusable masks are widely available from many retailers, both in store and online. For example, Amazon has packs of 100 disposable masks for approximately \$20.00 and Target has a large supply of cloth face masks. If the center would like to charge families for a mask, they could do so.

You may also make a face covering. The CDC provides both [sew and no-sew instructions](#).

## **9: If parents do not want their children to wear a face covering due to a health condition will BECR be requiring documentation on what the health condition is to be on file?**

No, documentation is not required. According to the EO FAQs, “you are not required to carry documentation to prove that you do not need to wear a face covering in public.” However, the child’s health history should note the issue that the center should be made aware of in the event of an emergency. If the provider wants to have parents sign off on what the medical condition is, she/he can do that, but neither DCF nor the Order require that.

## **10. Centers are concerned about infant and toddler development if they cannot see the teachers faces. What can they do?**

Masks with clear windows or clear face masks are available for purchase at various retailers.

## **11: Can I wear a face shield instead of a face covering?**

No. A face shield does not provide the same protections as a face covering. You are free to wear a face shield in addition to a face covering. But a face shield cannot be used in place of a face covering that would otherwise be required by this order. If an individual cannot wear a face mask due to medical reasons, they may wish to consider wearing a face shield, if appropriate.

## **12: What if the town or city I live in already has a face covering or mask order?**

The Governor’s order sets a minimum bar. If your local government has stricter requirements, those requirements must be followed.

## **13: Center staff are threatening to quit if they must wear a mask. What can the center do to keep staff?**

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This is an emergency order. The Department does not have the authority to grant exceptions for staff not to comply.

## **14. If a Group Child Care Center operates in a residence (i.e. where the licensee lives), are masks required under the Order?**

No, if the center operates in a house that is also used as a residence, the Order does not apply. If your local government has stricter requirements, those requirements must be followed.

## **15. What do I do if a center or provider isn't following the mask order?**

If you are a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the center and the center is not following the order, please contact the [regional licensing office](#) to file a complaint.