



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mask Order to Take Effect Friday at 5 p.m.

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. – The Cumberland County Board of Commissioners was unanimous in a request to the Public Health Director to issue a public health imminent hazard abatement order for a county-wide mask mandate during a special meeting on Aug. 24. The Public Health Director signed the abatement Aug. 26 which takes effect Friday, Aug. 27 at 5 p.m.

The abatement states “All persons within Cumberland County shall wear a face covering over the nose and mouth while in indoor spaces to include, [as an example, but not limited to] offices and workplaces, business establishments, private clubs attended by members, public transportation facilities and vehicles, stores for the sale of any goods, restaurants, bars, places for amusement or entertainment, gyms and places for exercise, schools, places of worship, or any place the public is invited or allowed to assemble.”

Face coverings are not required by someone who:

1. Should not wear a face covering due to any medical or behavioral condition or disability (including, but not limited to, any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to put on or remove the face covering without assistance).
2. Is under 5-years-old and a parent, guardian, or responsible person has been unable to place and maintain a face covering safely on the child's face.
3. Is in a private, individual office.
4. Is actively eating or drinking.
5. Is seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired in a way that requires the mouth to be visible.
6. Is giving a speech or performance for a broadcast, or to an audience, where they maintain a distance of at least 20 feet from the audience.
7. Is not in an indoor public space as described in this order.
8. Is temporarily removing their face covering for identification purposes to secure government or medical services or at the request of a law enforcement officer.
9. Would be at risk of injury from wearing a face covering at work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulations or workplace safety guidelines.
10. Is participating in worship activities for which wearing a face covering hinders the participation.
11. Children under 2-years-old should not wear a face covering.

Signs will be posted in county buildings and can be posted in public places to remind citizens and visitors of the mask requirement. The sign can be found at cumberlandcountync.gov/MaskOrder. This abatement order does not apply to federal or state facilities. Rules for face coverings in these facilities shall be set by the applicable state or federal authorities.

It is highly recommended to still maintain social distance while wearing a face covering. The combination of receiving a safe and effective vaccine, social distancing and wearing a mask is the best defense against the spread of COVID-19. Wearing face coverings when outdoors is strongly encouraged when social distancing is not possible, but not required by this abatement order.

The positivity rate of infections in Cumberland County has recently reported as 15.1% as of Aug. 26. This is almost three times the rate compared to the beginning of July. The positivity rate of infections in surrounding counties is also at a higher rate than what the World Health Organization recommends, which is 5% positivity. They are Harnett at 13.4%, Hoke at 18.6%, Sampson at 13.2%, Bladen at 18.1%, Robeson at 16.3%, compared to the State of North Carolina at 13.5%.

To file a complaint concerning a violation of this abatement, please visit cumberlandcountync.gov/MaskOrder or to speak with a Cumberland County Health Department representative concerning a violation of this abatement, please call (910) 678-7657.

Please visit cumberlandcountync.gov/MaskOrder for more information about the abatement and a downloadable abatement sign to place in public areas. Watch the Board of Commissioners Special Meeting at [YouTube.com/cumberlandcountyNC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=611111111111) for the full discussion from Aug. 24.

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