

Governor Janet Mills Executive Order 11-04-2020

Following Record COVID-19 Cases, Governor Mills Announces New Face Covering Executive Order -Face coverings must now be worn in public settings regardless of how far apart you are from other people

On the day Maine recorded 183 new cases of COVID-19, the highest single-day increase since the beginning of the pandemic, Governor Janet Mills announced an Executive Order requiring Maine people to wear face coverings in public settings, regardless of the ability to maintain physical distance. The new order strengthens an earlier one stating that face coverings must be worn only when physical distancing is difficult to maintain. Earlier this week, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker issued a similar order. Additionally, owners and operators of all indoor public settings in Maine must now post plainly visible signs notifying entrants of the requirement to wear cloth face coverings, and may deny service or entry for non-compliance. Previously, only certain types of businesses like large retail businesses were responsible for implementing measures requiring customers to wear face coverings.

“We have recorded yet another day of record high case numbers. This deadly and dangerous virus is spreading all across our state,” said Governor Mills. “Protect your family. Protect a health care worker. Protect the elderly. Wear your face covering. Save lives. It is that simple.”

Wearing a face covering is proven to significantly reduce the spread of COVID-19. Maine’s 7-day positivity rate, while still significantly lower than other states, has more than doubled in the past two weeks to 1.52 percent while hospitalizations have also increased. “Maine is experiencing widespread community transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19,” said Dr. Nirav D. Shah, Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. “Wearing face coverings and staying at least six feet away from others when out in public are ways that every person in Maine can limit potential spread of the virus to help make their communities and homes safer.”

Face coverings are required for all children age 5 and older in public settings, including school and childcare settings, and are recommended for children ages 2 to 4 unless deemed developmentally inappropriate. Exemptions continue to exist for those who have serious medical conditions or who are otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

“The safety of our employees and customers is our #1 priority,” said Adam Reny, co-owner of Renys and member of the Retail Association of Maine. “All of us at Renys want to be a part of the solution. While we know that wearing a mask is uncomfortable we feel it is necessary to protect our employees, customers, and communities across the state of Maine. In order for us to have a safe and successful holiday shopping season we are requiring that all employees and customers wear a mask while in our stores. So please be kind to our staff and your fellow Mainers as we all work together to get through this.”

Governor Mills’ Executive Order also reduces indoor gathering limits as previously announced. The gathering limit on outdoor activities remains at 100 people under existing guidelines, with physical distancing and the use of face coverings. Occupancy limits for retail establishments remain at 5 people per 1,000 square feet of shopping space. The Mills Administration had previously increased indoor seating limits to 50 percent of permitted capacity or 100 people, whichever was less.

