



DANIEL HARRIGAN, MAYOR

CITY OF AKRON MASK ORDINANCE FAQS

WHEN SHOULD MASKS BE WORN?

All individuals within the City of Akron must wear a face covering which completely covers their nose and mouth, unless an exception applies, when in public places including:

- When entering, exiting, or walking around a store, restaurant, bar, gym, hotel, recreation facility, City building, etc.
- In public transportation
- In common areas of an apartment building
- When outdoors and within 6 feet of people outside your household

WHO IS EXEMPT FROM WEARING A MASK?

This ordinance does not apply to individuals with a medical condition, mental health condition, or a developmental disability that prevents them from safely wearing a mask and children under the age of 10.

DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK AT WORK?

- **If you work with the public:** Yes, to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and keep Akron businesses open, all businesses must require all employees that interact with the public to wear a facial covering, unless exempt. If an employee fails to wear a mask at work when required, the employee could face a personal fine of \$50 from Summit County Public Health, and the business could face a fine of \$250. Fines will only be issued after a warning and an opportunity to comply.
- **If you work in a private facility:** Follow the guidelines of your employer for when masks must be worn. Masks are not required by this ordinance when you are alone in your work office, conference room, or other personal workspace not intended for use by the general public. Masks are not required when they would violate established employment practices, documented industry standards, or a business's documented safety policies. The City strongly encourages wearing face coverings in common areas or when around others, whenever it is safe to do so.

DO BUSINESSES NEED TO REQUIRE INDIVIDUALS TO WEAR MASKS?

Yes, businesses should instruct employees and patrons to wear masks while inside their place of business, unless that individual is exempt. If a patron does not comply with a business's request to wear a mask, they should be asked to leave. Any business that fails to require masks may be subject to a civil penalty from Summit County Public Health (SCPH) of \$250 per violation following a warning and an opportunity to comply. SCPH will first work with the business to provide education and resources for ensuring compliance.

Businesses should engage with individuals who refuse to wear masks as required in the same way they would manage customers who smoke indoors, refuse to wear proper attire, or otherwise fail to meet the basic standards of their business and the law.

WHAT KIND OF FACE COVERING IS REQUIRED, AND HOW SHOULD IT BE WORN?

According to the Akron ordinance, an acceptable face covering is a piece of cloth, fabric, or other material that fully covers the mouth and nose and that is secured with ear straps or otherwise tied so as to prevent slipping. A face covering may be factory-made or may be handmade and improvised from household materials. Face coverings include, but are not limited to, bandanas, scarfs, medical masks, and cloth masks; and also include respirators, N95 masks or other personal protective equipment that provides a higher level of protection than required.

How to Wear Your Face Mask Correctly:

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- **Do NOT** put the face covering under your chin, around your neck or up on your forehead
- **Do NOT** touch the face covering once secure, and, if you must adjust it, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect your hands before touching it.
- Thoroughly wash and dry your face mask after each use, and store it in a clean place between uses.

WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES FOR VIOLATING THE AKRON MASK ORDINANCE AND WHO WILL ENFORCE IT?

All enforcement of the proposed order would be issued by Summit County Public Health (SCPH). No one will be stopped by the Akron Police Department for suspected violation of the order, and no criminal charges will be filed.

Businesses that fail to enforce the requirements of the order within their establishment, after a warning and an opportunity to correct the violation, could face a potential civil penalty of \$250. Individuals who fail to comply with the order, after a warning and an opportunity to correct the violation, could face a potential civil penalty of \$50.

WHEN DOES THIS ORDINANCE TAKE EFFECT?

This ordinance took effect immediately upon its passage by Akron City Council on the evening of Monday, July 13.

HOW LONG DOES THE AKRON MASK ORDINANCE LAST?

The mandatory mask order in Akron will remain in effect as long as necessary to control the spread of COVID-19. It will remain in place until repealed by Akron City Council, in consultation with Summit County Public Health.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE MANDATORY MASK ORDINANCE?

Wearing a face covering will reduce community spread of COVID-19 which will save the lives of Akron residents and visitors. Further, this small inconvenience will help us avoid significant spread which may overwhelm our hospital systems and could force another economic closure.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “COVID-19 [spreads](#) mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice (e.g., while shouting, chanting, or singing). These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. [Recent studies](#) show that a significant portion of individuals with COVID-19 lack symptoms (are ‘asymptomatic’) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (are ‘pre-symptomatic’) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms.”

“To reduce the spread of COVID-19, CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings when around people outside of their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

Cloth face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others. Wearing a cloth face covering will help protect people around you, including those at [higher risk of severe illness](#) from COVID-19 and workers who frequently come into close contact with other people (e.g., in stores and restaurants). **Cloth face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings.** The spread of COVID-19 can be reduced when cloth face coverings are used along with other [preventive measures](#), including [social distancing](#), frequent handwashing, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.”

DO CHILDREN HAVE TO WEAR MASKS?

- Children under 10 years old are not required to wear a mask under this ordinance. Any child 2 years old or under **must not wear a face covering** because of risk of suffocation.
- All persons, including students, administrators, and teachers, are exempt from the mask requirement while in a school or school district facility. Individuals in school or school district facilities shall comply with the regulations and guidelines promulgated by that school and school district governing body and the Ohio Department of Education.

WHEN DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK IN A RESTAURANT OR BAR?

Masks must be worn in a place of business that is open to the public, and while inside a place of business as to the areas that are accessible to, and are intended for the use of, the public or other patrons/guests.

When masks must be worn in a restaurant or bar:

- when entering, exiting, or waiting in line to enter
- when getting up from your own table or seat and moving about the facility
- when in common areas of the facility like a lobby or restroom

Masks are NOT required to be worn in a restaurant or bar when:

- eating or drinking
- sitting at your own table or seat with members of your party

DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK WHEN EXERCISING?

No. Face coverings are not required while:

- Walking or exercising outdoors, alone or with other members of your household, so long as physical separation of not less than six feet is maintained from others outside your household;
- Actually engaged in exercising in a gym or indoor facility, so long as physical separation of not less than six feet is maintained from others outside your household.

DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK OUTSIDE?

Face coverings are required outdoors when within 6 feet of individuals outside your household.

DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK AT A WEDDING, PARTY OR GATHERING?

Yes, masks must be worn any time you are gathering with people outside your household, whether inside or outside. Masks do not need to be worn when eating or drinking. Masks are not required while inside a religious facility, but are strongly recommended.

DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK IN MY CAR?

No. Masks are not required while in a personal or commercial vehicle while parked or moving, so long as it is not a rideshare vehicle or taxi. Employees should follow the instructions of their employer for when masks are required in work vehicles.

DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK AT A CHURCH OR RELIGIOUS FACILITY?

Individuals are not required to wear masks at a religious facility or if wearing a mask substantially burdens a sincerely held religious belief. However, the City along with the CDC and many other public health officials strongly recommend the wearing of masks at any public place.

DO I NEED TO WEAR A MASK WHILE IN A METRO BUS, TAXI, OR RIDESHARE VEHICLE (UBER, LYFT, ETC.)?

Yes, both drivers and passengers in any public transportation vehicle are required to wear a mask. Businesses should request individuals wear masks while in their buses, taxis, or rideshare vehicles.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MASKS IN SCHOOL?

Students, administrators, and teachers are exempt from this order while in a school or school district facility. Individuals in school or school district facilities shall comply with the regulations and guidelines promulgated by that school and school district governing body and the Ohio Department of Education.

I AM MORE THAN SIX FEET AWAY FROM OTHER PEOPLE; DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK?

It depends. If you are in public area of a building, you must still wear a mask even when maintaining more than 6 feet of distance from others. This will help prevent the spreading of germs through the air or onto common areas surfaces. Masks are not required when maintaining sufficient physical distance outdoors.

HOW IS AKRON'S ORDER DIFFERENT FROM THE STATE OF OHIO MASK ORDER APPLICABLE TO SUMMIT COUNTY?

On July 9, 2020, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced that the Ohio Department of Health issued a face covering order for all of Summit County. The order only remains in

effect while the county remains in a “red” or “purple” status under the Ohio Public Health Advisory System.

Passing a local ordinance will allow Akron to:

- pursue civil fines (instead of the criminal misdemeanor penalties available under the state order) and
- maintain the mandatory face covering order as long as necessary to stop the spread of COVID-19, unlike the state order which may come and go.

HOW CAN I MAKE MY OWN MASK?

Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html> for easy “Sew and No Sew Instructions” for making a face covering at home.

HOW DO I REPORT A SUSPECTED VIOLATION OF THIS ORDINANCE?

Concerns of suspected violations of the City of Akron mask ordinance (or any state COVID-19 regulation enforced by Summit County Public Health) can be reported to Summit County Public Health at <https://www.scph.org/report-non-essential-businesses-or-operations> or the Summit County Public Health Call Center at 330-926-5795.