



NEWS RELEASE

COVID-19 RESPONSE

CONTACT:
Felisa Cardona
Deputy Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5429
Felisa.Cardona@cao.sbcounty.gov

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Public Health officer orders face covering, electronic-only religious services



In an effort to protect the public from further spread of COVID-19, the County's Acting Health Officer has formally ordered everyone in San Bernardino County to wear a face covering when leaving home.

Face coverings may include coverings that secure to the ears or back of the head and encompass the mouth and nose. Homemade cloth ear loop covers, bandannas and handkerchiefs, and neck gaiters may be used to reduce the spread of COVID-19 particularly among asymptomatic people. Surgical masks and N95 masks must be preserved for healthcare workers and emergency responders.

"Staying home, practicing social distancing and frequent handwashing are far more effective ways to combat the spread of COVID-19, and face coverings are not a substitute for those practices," said Dr. Erin Gustafson, the County's Acting Public Health Officer.

Tuesday's order also says faith-based services must be electronic only through streaming or online technology. People may not leave their homes for driving parades or drive-up services or to pick up non-essential items such as pre-packaged Easter eggs or bags filled with candy and toys at a drive-thru location.

"We understand that this is an important time for Christians around the world and it is natural to want to worship and celebrate with our families. Right now, however, is a critical time for our country and our community – we can still celebrate this time from the safety of our individual homes while we help flatten the curve and save lives," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman. "When we stay home we help our healthcare workers and our emergency responders and vulnerable populations beat COVID-19."

Many churches and houses of worship are hosting "virtual" services, streamed online. The County encourages single-family, home-based worshipping and activities, including Easter egg hunts among household members inside the house or in residential back yards.

As of today, San Bernardino County has 530 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and the deaths of 16 county residents have been associated with the disease.

The Acting Health Officer's order may be viewed [here](#). Violation of the order is a crime punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine or imprisonment up to 90 days, or both.

For information about the coronavirus crisis, visit the County's coronavirus website at sbcovid19.com. New information and resources are updated daily. The public can also contact the COVID-19 hotline from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday at (909) 387-3911, or email the County at coronavirus@dph.sbcounty.gov.