



**COUNTY OF DEL NORTE**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEALTH BRANCH

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**ORDER OF THE DEL NORTE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER FOR THE WEARING  
OF FACE COVERINGS IN WORKPLACES AND PUBLIC SETTINGS**

**DATE OF ORDER: 11/22/2021**

**Please read this Order carefully. Violation of or failure to comply with this Order is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. (California Health and Safety Code sections 120295, *et seq.*)**

**SUMMARY OF THIS ORDER**

**This Order amends the Order from November 3rd, 2021 requiring all individuals to wear face coverings when indoors in workplaces and public settings, as well as outdoor crowded public spaces and events, with limited exemptions, and recommends that businesses and events make face coverings available to individuals entering these spaces. Facial coverings are no longer required at crowded outdoor spaces and events. Facial coverings are no longer required by youth sports teams and officials and staff engaged in youth sports programs that can test participants with at least once weekly frequency.**

**BACKGROUND**

Since June 2021 when most restrictions from the State of California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy were lifted, the average daily incident case rate of COVID-19 in Del Norte County has increased significantly to reach the "High Transmission" level of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ("CDC") Indicators for Levels of Community Transmission. This resulted in a surge of hospitalizations from COVID-19 in Del Norte County which subsequently caused significant strain on our rural healthcare infrastructure and requiring resource requests from the state.

The significantly more transmissible Delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has become the predominant strain in the US and this is likely so in Del Norte County. While the vast majority of cases have occurred among unvaccinated persons, the increase in cases among fully vaccinated persons has also increased. Recent statewide data demonstrates over 90% of tested samples in California are Delta variant. The COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized in the US have been shown to be highly safe and effective at providing protection to individuals and communities, particularly against severe COVID-19 disease

and death, and are recommended by the CDC for all populations for whom the vaccine is authorized by the US Food and Drug Administration.

In considering options to stem this rapid increase in COVID-19 transmission, a continued increase in the proportion of the population vaccinated is necessary but not sufficient. Universal use of face coverings in all public settings, including all indoor as well as crowded outdoor settings and events, was an appropriate intervention during this summer's surge in cases and the least disruptive and most immediately effective additional measure that could have been undertaken.

Since that time, the number of new cases, the testing positivity rate, and new hospitalizations and deaths have decreased, but not to pre-surge levels. Therefore the health officer is amending the previous order and will continue to assess the public health situation as it evolves.

## **ORDER**

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, 120175, AND 120220, THE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF DEL NORTE HEREBY ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Except as otherwise set forth herein, the July 28, 2021 [Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#) issued by the California Department of Public Health (“CDPH”), as may be amended from time to time, continues to apply throughout the County.
2. Face Coverings. A “Face Covering” means a face covering that is well-fitted to an individual and covers the nose and mouth especially while talking, consistent with the Face Covering Requirements. [CDPH guidance “Get the Most out of Masking”](#) addresses current recommendations for a Well-Fitted Masks and Face Covering. A non-vented N95 mask is strongly recommended even if not fit-tested, to provide maximum protection. A Well-Fitted Mask does not include a scarf, ski mask, balaclava, bandana, turtleneck, collar, or single layer of fabric or any mask that has an unfiltered one-way exhaust valve.
3. This Order directs that face coverings shall be worn, regardless of vaccination status, over the mouth and nose, in all indoor public settings, venues, gatherings, and workplaces, such as, but not limited to: offices, retail stores, restaurants and bars, theaters, family entertainment centers, conference centers, and State and local government offices. For purposes of this Order, all non-residential settings are considered public and common areas within apartments and other multi-household residential settings (e.g., common patios, laundry rooms, lobbies) are also considered public. In light of our improving case counts, this order no longer applies to all outdoor crowded public spaces or outdoor events that involve sustained close contact with other people outside of one’s household.
4. Individuals, businesses, venue operators, hosts, and others responsible for the operation of indoor public settings and outdoor crowded settings and events must continue to:
  - Require all patrons to wear face coverings for all indoor settings and outdoor crowded settings and events, regardless of their vaccination status; and
  - Post clearly visible and easy-to-read signage at all entry points for indoor settings and outdoor crowded settings and events to communicate the masking requirements to all patrons.

In addition, those responsible for indoor settings and outdoor crowded public settings and events are strongly encouraged to provide face coverings at no cost to individuals required to wear them.

5. Exemptions from face covering requirements – Individuals are not required to wear face coverings in the following circumstances:

- Persons younger than two years old;
- Employees working alone in closed offices or other rooms;
- Persons actively eating and/or drinking;
- Persons swimming or showering in a fitness facility;
- Persons in a private car alone or with members of their household;
- Persons actively engaged in physical activity where a mask poses a threat to personal safety or health as assessed by reputable professional medical entity such as the American Academy of Pediatrics;
- Persons obtaining a medical or cosmetic service involving the nose or face for which temporary removal of the face covering is necessary to perform the service;
- Persons specifically exempted from wearing face masks pursuant to other CDPH guidance
- Vaccinated employees working in isolated cubicle settings able to maintain at least 6 feet of interpersonal separation.
- People actively engaged in youth sports including staff, officials, and student athletes, provided they engage in weekly testing as follows:
  - testing occurs once weekly with either PCR or antigen test of all players, staff, and officials regardless of vaccination status
  - record-keeping of all individuals tested, type of test performed, and test results made available to Del Norte Public Health on request.

6. Employers and businesses subject to the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards (“ETS”) and/or the Cal/OSHA Aerosol Transmissible Diseases Standards should consult the applicable regulations for additional requirements. The ETS allow local health jurisdictions to mandate more protective measures. This Order, which requires face coverings for all individuals in indoor settings and businesses other than the aforementioned exemptions, takes precedence over the more permissive ETS regarding employee face coverings.

7. Unvaccinated as well as fully vaccinated persons should continue to follow CDC guidance for [unvaccinated people](#) and for [fully vaccinated people](#) to protect themselves and others, including wearing a well-fitted [face covering](#), [physical distancing](#) (at least 6 feet), avoiding crowds, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, covering coughs and sneezes, [washing hands](#) often, and following any applicable workplace, school, or business sector guidance or requirements including the Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards. Fully vaccinated people should still watch for [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, especially following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. If symptoms develop, all people – regardless of vaccination status – should isolate and be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including SARS-CoV-2 testing. Anyone testing positive for SARS-CoV-2, regardless of vaccination status, must follow applicable Del Norte County Public Health isolation orders.

8. This Order shall become effective at 12:01 am on November 23rd, 2021 and will continue to be in effect until it is extended, rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Health Officer. The Health Officer intends to continually review the need for the Order and plans to rescind further facial covering requirements when the following criteria have been met:

- a. CDC transmission levels in Del Norte County have declined to Orange level or below for 4 consecutive weeks AND
- b. Respiratory diagnoses plus COVID-related admissions do not account for more than 50% of county-wide hospitalizations AND
- c. 55% of our current eligible population as currently calculated has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

9. Additional *recommendations* for school sports, which remain a high risk activity for COVID-19 transmission: DNPH recommends a more frequent testing strategy including a rapid antigen test the day before game play, and a PCR test done weekly on Fridays so that results are generally in the beginning of the week to reduce potential in-class exposure by student athletes. COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for all participants who are eligible for vaccination, as well as coaches, staff and volunteers. Districts, schools, leagues, clubs, teams, organizations and tournaments/events are free to require that all participants and personnel be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and/or wear facial coverings. DNPH recommends health screening of players, coaches, staff and spectators prior to or upon arriving at the event to identify those with symptoms.

10. All State orders and guidance documents referenced in State orders are complementary to this Order. By way of this Order, the Health Officer adopts such directives as orders as well. Where a conflict exists between a local order and any State public health order related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the most restrictive provision controls pursuant to, and consistent with, California Health and Safety Code section 131080, unless the State Health Officer issues an order that expressly determines a provision of a local public health order is a menace to public health.

11. Copies of this Order shall promptly be: (1) posted on the County website and (2) provided to any member of the public requesting a copy of this Order.

12. If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.

**IT IS SO ORDERED:**



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Aaron Stutz MD FAAEM  
Health Officer of the County of Del Norte

Date: 11-22-21