

May 25, 2021

**ORDER OF COMMISSIONERS COURT
Requiring Fever and Health Screening and Face
Coverings in County Owned or Controlled Buildings**

Approve: E/G

The Commissioners Court of Harris County, Texas, met in regular session at its regular term at the Harris County Administration Building in the City of Houston, Texas, on May 25, 2021, with all members present.

A quorum was present. Among other business, the following was transacted:

**ORDER REQUIRING FEVER AND HEALTH
SCREENING AND FACE COVERINGS IN COUNTY
OWNED OR CONTROLLED BUILDINGS**

Commissioner Ellis introduced an order and made a motion that the same be adopted. Commissioner A. Garcia seconded the motion for adoption of the order. The motion, carrying with it the adoption of the order, prevailed by the following vote:

Vote of the Court	Yes	No	Abstain
Judge Lina Hidalgo	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Rodney Ellis	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Adrian Garcia	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Tom S. Ramsey P.E.	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. R. Jack Cagle	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The County Judge thereupon announced that the motion had duly and lawfully carried and that the order had been duly and lawfully adopted. The adopted order follows:

IT IS ORDERED that effective upon approval by Commissioners Court and continuing through the fourteenth day following the expiration of Governor Greg Abbott’s final declaration certifying that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) poses an imminent threat of disaster, unless terminated or modified by an earlier order issued by the Harris County Commissioners Court, the Court deems it in the public interest to order the following:

1. Except as otherwise expressly provided below:
 - a. Any person entering a building owned or controlled by Harris County shall be screened for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 including but not limited to:
 - i. A fever screen for a temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit;
 - ii. A health screen for symptoms consistent with COVID-19;
 - iii. A travel questionnaire; and/or
 - iv. A screen for exposure to anyone with the above conditions.

- b. Any person who exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID-19 may be denied entrance into the building.
 - c. Any person who refuses to submit to screening may be denied entrance into the building.
2. Except as otherwise expressly provided below, all visitors 10 years of age or older seeking entry into a Harris County owned or controlled building are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth when entering such building.
 3. Except as otherwise expressly provided below, all visitors 10 years of age or older are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth while inside Harris County owned or controlled buildings.
 4. Appropriate face coverings may include, but are not limited to, face shields, face masks, homemade masks, scarfs, bandanas, or a handkerchief. **IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT PEOPLE NOT OBTAIN OR WEAR MEDICAL MASKS or N-95 RESPIRATORS AS THEY ARE A NEEDED RESOURCE FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS.** Our healthcare workers and first responders on the front-line combatting COVID-19 must have priority access to medical masks or other personal protective equipment.
 5. These face-covering recommendations do not apply to any visitor:
 - a. with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering.
 - b. while that visitor is consuming food or drink, or is seated to eat or drink in a café, cafeteria or restaurant located in a County-owned or controlled building.
 - c. who is obtaining a service that requires temporary removal of the face covering for security surveillance, screening, or a need for specific access to the face, but only to the extent necessary for the temporary removal.
 - d. who is voting, assisting a voter, serving as a poll watcher, or actively administering an election, but wearing a face covering is strongly encouraged.
 - i. Voters are strongly encouraged, but not required, to wear face coverings in the polling place in order to protect the health and safety of voters, election workers, and local election officials and their staff. Polling locations have been supplied with ample masks to provide to voters who do not have one of their own. Voters who cannot or choose not to wear a mask should be encouraged to vote curbside. However, if a voter prefers to vote indoors, he/she must be allowed inside and should vote

at a designated machine for his/her safety and the safety of other voters and poll workers. Reasonable social distancing measures may also be put into place for voters who are not wearing face coverings in the polling place.

- ii. A voter who refuses to participate in the screening process in a County owned or controlled building may be required to use a separate entrance to the building, provided the entrance is ADA-accessible. If there is a line to enter the voting location, voters may also be directed to wait in a separate line for voters.

6. Harris County employees entering County buildings for any purpose associated with their official job duties are required to wear face coverings unless:

- a. alone in a room or office in a County owned, operated or occupied building behind a closed door;
- b. in any area in a County building where he/she would not otherwise come into close proximity (*i.e.*, within six feet) of other officials, employees or the public.
- c. the employee has a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering.
- d. that employee is consuming food or drink, or is seated to eat or drink in a café, cafeteria or restaurant located in a County-owned or controlled building and keeping a safe distance from others.
- e. exempted from this requirement pursuant to an official Harris County order or employee policy.

7. If a judge's courtroom is located in a courthouse with other county offices, that judge will determine whether face coverings must be worn in his/her courtroom and chambers. A court's orders regarding face coverings do not extend to the use of such face coverings in other areas of a Harris County owned or controlled building.

8. This Order applies to any person entering a building owned or controlled by Harris County, and is intended to reduce the airborne transmission of COVID-19 and to thus protect all persons in such buildings. Compliance with this Order for visitors to County buildings is voluntary.

9. State supported living centers, government-owned hospitals, and government-operated hospitals may continue to use appropriate policies regarding the wearing of face coverings.

10. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, and any county and municipal jails acting consistent with guidance by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards may continue to use appropriate policies regarding the wearing of face coverings.
11. If any subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this Order or any application of it to any person, structure, or circumstance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, then such decision will not affect the validity of the remaining portions or applications of this Order.
12. All Harris County officials and employees are authorized to do any and all things necessary or convenient to accomplish the purpose of this Order.