

Governor Mike DeWine announced, effective on Wednesday, July 8, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., a new Ohio Department of Health (ODH) order will mandate face coverings in public in all counties that are designated as a Red Alert Level 3 Public Health Emergency or a Purple Alert Level 4 Public Health Emergency.

Currently, seven counties in Ohio are designated at Red Alert Level 3, which indicates that those in these counties have a very high risk of exposure and spread:

- Butler County
- Cuyahoga County
- Franklin County
- Hamilton County
- Huron County
- Montgomery County, and
- Trumbull County

As of today, no counties have reached Purple Alert Level 4; however, Franklin County is approaching this top tier.

"In addition to social distancing and reducing unnecessary interactions with others, we know that wearing a mask helps protect others in the community. It has been, and remains, a very strong recommendation that I urge all Ohioans to continue doing even if you are not in a red-alert county," DeWine said. "In red-alert and purple-alert counties, however, we must do more to help protect citizens because the risk of spread is increasing even more."

Last week, DeWine announced the creation of [Ohio's Public Health Advisory System](#), which consists of four alert levels that provide Ohioans with guidance as to the severity of COVID-19 spread in the counties in which they live. Each level is calculated based on seven data-driven health indicators.

Those in counties designated as Red Alert Level 3 or Purple Alert Level 4 are required to wear a face covering:

- In any indoor location that is not a residence;
- When outdoors and unable to consistently maintain a distance of six feet or more from individuals who are not members of their household; or
- While waiting for, riding, driving/operating public transportation, a taxi, a private car service or a ride-sharing vehicle.

The order does not apply to children under the age of 10 or any other minor who cannot safely wear a face covering. The order also reflects the mask guidance in place for employees and businesses which does not require a person to wear a mask if their physician advises against it, if wearing a mask is prohibited by federal regulation, if communicating with the hearing impaired, when alone in an office/personal workspace and other similar measures.

Schools that offer Kindergarten through Grade 12 instruction should follow the guidelines set forth last week by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Health.

ODH will update county rankings every Thursday. Any county that increases to Red Alert Level 3 will automatically be included in the face-covering mandate. Any county that decreases from Red Alert Level 3 to Orange Alert Level 2 will automatically be released from the face-covering requirement.