



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2020

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## Gov. Sisolak announces mandatory face covering policy in public

CARSON CITY, NV — Today, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak issued a mandatory face covering policy for all Nevadans and visitors by signing Directive 024.

"I'm proud of the work Nevadans have completed thus far in helping us flatten the curve, but our work is far from over" **said Governor Sisolak.** "Today's directive is our opportunity to limit our risk for exposure and infection, and to keep our businesses open and our economy moving. For Nevada to stay safe and stay open, we must make face coverings a routine part of our daily life."

This directive comes after a four week climb in cases at which time the Governor asked the Nevada Medical Advisory Team to analyze potential options for slowing the spread, specific to facial coverings. Research done by the MAT and the CDC has indicated that facial coverings are one of the most effective ways to slow the transmission of this disease.

Per this requirement, anyone in any public space throughout the State, including visitors, will need to wear a mask. This includes using public transportation, public facing work environments, when patronizing businesses, or interacting with others in any generally publicly accessible space.

Directive 024 and a guidance document corresponding to this directive with information on the practical application and exceptions are attached to this email and can be found online at <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/>.

The Governor's full prepared remarks related to Directive 024 are as follows:

*Good evening, thank you for being here tonight.*

*Today, I am again joined by Caleb Cage, the Nevada COVID-19 Response Director and Ms. Julia Peek, a deputy administrator in the Department of Health and Human Services. In this role, Ms. Peek is helping lead Nevada's statewide contact tracing efforts. I am pleased to have them both here with me.*

*As you know, Nevada is continuing to operate in Phase 2 of our Roadmap to Recovery plan, allowing our medical, public health and emergency response professionals to evaluate and analyze new trends, including what is now a four week upward trend of new daily cases.*

*We are still watching the continued increase in our confirmed and suspected COVID-19 hospitalizations as well. Recently, that number reached 439 cases in Nevada's hospitals statewide, however, patients requiring ICU beds and ventilators continues to hold steady. The Nevada Hospital Association is regularly evaluating the effects of COVID19 on staffing, PPE supplies and bed capacity. At this point, the hospital association continues to remain confident they can serve the needs of all Nevadans.*

*I want to take a moment to remind everyone where we've been. Our goal for Phase 1 was to flatten the curve. Nevadans responded to the challenge and we were able to lift some restrictions.*

*To go to Phase 2, our goal was to achieve 14 days of flat or decreasing positive test rate and hospitalizations. Many Nevadans acted responsibly, and*

*after achieving those goals, we reopened much of our economy.*

*While there continued to be some limitations, bars, restaurants, beauty salons and many other businesses brought their employees back to work and opened their doors. A short while later we were able to reopen our states primary industry...tourism.*

*At that time, I told Nevadans that to stay open and remove further restrictions we all had to accept our personal responsibility to keep our workers, our families and ourselves safe.*

*At that time, I mandated that Nevada businesses and employees who interact with the public wear face coverings and continued to strongly encourage members of the public to wear face coverings as well. Unfortunately, as you can see from the data, we have taken some steps backwards.*

*Clearly for many, the excitement and enthusiasm for escaping our confinement and finally being able to enjoy dinner out with our families, buy new clothes or get a haircut, overshadowed the good judgement we practiced in the previous months.*

*Unfortunately and inexcusably, I also made an error in judgement while out to dinner, where I was photographed not wearing a mask. It was an error and inexcusable.*

*Too many Nevadans have had the same lapse of judgement. Every hour there are photographs, or videos, posted of large unmasked clusters of people...clusters of potential COVID19 spread.*

*So I want to put it to you like this: If back in March, before we shut down the vast majority of our economy, I said to you: we can keep our economy open if everyone agrees to wear masks and maintain 6 feet in person-to-person distance. Who would have not accepted that offer? That is exactly what needs*

*to be considered today.*

*I don't know why or when protecting our health and our neighbors' lives became a political, partisan or even philosophical decision. For me it's none of those ... it's a medical necessity, a human obligation and.... it's good for business.*

*Study after study, worldwide, every notable medical professional from President Trump's top advisor, Dr. Fauci, to all of our Nevada medical professionals, assert one unassailable conclusion... wearing face coverings saves lives, period.*

*In fact, one study highlighted by my Medical Advisory Team showed that replacing our strict lockdown with social distancing alone, without universal masking, results in an unchecked spread, with potentially devastating results.*

*It showed that when at least 80% of a population adopts universal masking, it results in a substantial reduction of infection.*

*On the other hand, masking at only 50% of a population is not sufficient to prevent continued spread.*

*We owe it to each other to accept the fact that wearing face coverings saves lives. We owe it to the many workers.....health care professionals, retail clerks, restaurant workers, grocery store employees to accept that fact. We owe it to Nevada's many businesses large and small to accept that fact.*

*My fellow Nevadans: I'm offering us all another opportunity to limit our risk for exposure and infection, and to keep our businesses open and our economy moving. For Nevada to stay safe and stay open, we must make face coverings a routine part of our daily life.*

*That's why, today, at the recommendation of the Medical Advisory Team, I signed a directive with a new requirement for Nevadans and visitors to wear a cover their nose and mouth with a mask or face covering, when in public space, whether publicly or privately owned. This directive is effective on Friday, to give businesses a day to get ready.*

*We understand that the situation in some areas of the State is not as bad as others. We recognize that as well as all of the work that everyone across the State has been doing. However, we are seeing a spike in positive cases and we need to ask everyone around the State to do their very best to keep us all safe.*

*This especially applies to indoor activities in which you are near other people, including grocery stores, retail businesses, malls and gaming properties. Detailed guidance is available online at [NVHealthResponse.nv.gov](https://www.nvhealthresponse.gov).*

*There are, of course, exceptions to this directive. For instance, those with medical conditions that make it difficult to breathe, those with a disability that prevents them from wearing a face covering, and young children between the ages of two and nine are exempt from this requirement, however they are still strongly encouraged to wear a face covering as much as possible. The full list of exemptions are outlined in the guidance online.*

*I encourage all businesses to prominently post signage to alert customers and help ensure this directive is followed. I know there are some businesses who have already required face coverings for customers and I thank you for this strong and helpful stance.*

*Businesses that fail to meet requirements in this directive will face violations from local licensing agencies and regulatory authorities, in addition to Nevada OSHA. A reminder as well that businesses have the right to ask a patron to leave if they are not following this directive.*

*I call on local governments and regulatory authorities to help ensure there is education around this directive for our businesses and subsequent enforcement through the appropriate bodies if compliance is not met.*

*But it's not just on the businesses or state and local government – it's on all of us. I am asking individuals throughout Nevada to take this seriously and understand the risk you are posing on yourself and others by not wearing a face covering.*

*And I know there are probably a lot of questions about additional enforcement measures for individuals. I want to be clear: this is a mandate, so enforcement language is necessary, however, ideally there won't be any criminal or civil sanctions for individuals. The last thing I want is for monetary fines or criminal penalties to be imposed on Nevadans, which is why I strongly encourage everyone to follow this directive.*

*Nevada is a State that prides itself on it's fierce individualism. It's part of what makes us great. So I'm asking all of us to take our independent spirit and turn that into our individual responsibility to keep the lights on for businesses throughout our State.*

*I believe there are more good than bad in this, but I know we've all seen the concerning pictures of crowded spaces since reopening. They may appear anecdotal for now, but due to our increasing efforts in contact tracing, they won't be anecdotal for long.*

*Increased contact tracing capacity will continue to help us know where and how people are contracting this virus, and we'll soon be able to pinpoint industries and businesses where people are at higher risk of becoming infected with COVID-19.*

*I don't want to have to take steps backward by imposing stronger restrictions on those identified as high risk if I don't have to – and the best way to*

*prevent that is to not let a business type or industry become high risk in the first place. It's on all of us, Nevada.*

*To be clear, due to the data and time needed for evaluation of contact tracing and impacts of this new face covering directive, any discussion of entering Phase 3 will be tabled.*

*The pandemic is not over, as I said last week, we are not yet post-COVID, we are still in the middle of the first wave of COVID.*

*So, please, I cannot emphasize this enough, wear your face covering anytime you leave your house. When you go to restaurant, when you stop at a pharmacy, when you enter a casino, wear your face covering.*

*You don't need to wear an N95 mask like medical professionals wear. The Medical Advisory Team and the CDC recommend homemade fabric face coverings of all types.*

*They're easy to make, and can be made from cloth, or fashioned out of something as simple as a bandana or an old T-shirt. Options for doing so have been linked in our guidance and there are several additional resources online. Let's all work together to stay safe to stay open. No shirt, no shoes, no mask, no service.*

*I know Nevadans are worried not only about their health but also about their jobs and commerce. They keep asking me and my team, "What can I do to help?" You can do this. Everyone can. This simple act is this is not only a way for us to save lives, but also a way for us to save the Nevada economy.*

*And while I called this press conference to discuss face coverings tonight, I also wanted to give a quick update on our state budget. Afterall, our budget and economy have been directly impacted by the public health crisis.*

*As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused budget shortfalls for both the 2020 fiscal year and the 2021 fiscal year.*

*Major actions to address the budget shortfall in FY2020 included transferring the Rainy Day Fund, reversing one-time appropriations and capital improvements, and reducing the operating budget by approximately \$67.5 million. These were approved by the Interim Finance Committee on June 12<sup>th</sup>.*

*That brings us to the projected Fiscal Year 2021 shortfall. The latest revised revenue projection developed jointly by the Fiscal Analysis Division and the Governor's Finance Office reflects a total General Fund shortfall estimated at approximately \$1.27 billion. This is approximately 25% of our annual operating budget.*

*We anticipate General Fund revenue collections for April business activity will be released within the next few days, at which time, the projected shortfalls for both FY20 and FY21 will be updated and final actions for both of my budget proposals can be finalized with the most up-to-date numbers.*

*Here's what I want to emphasize before I wrap up: This is not a normal recession. The state went from it's economic peak to its economic trough in a matter of weeks, as a result of tough decisions to save lives.*

*Revenues may very well recover faster than expected if the coronavirus were to subside due to responsible actions by all of us, or if a treatment were to become available earlier than anticipated. Or, revenues may recover more slowly if a second wave slows the reopening of our economy.*

*Unprecedented. Historic. Uncharted. All of these words fit our situation, and it would be irresponsible to release every minute-by-minute revision of this budget proposal without proper vetting by our fiscal experts, and before receiving our latest revenue numbers, with the hopes of reducing the potentially dramatic impacts to our state budget.*



*I look forward to receiving these numbers and making any final adjustments to the FY21 budget proposal so I can share it with all of you.*

*Finally, I wanted to acknowledge some amazing Nevadans. Back in early April, my office launched the Hero of the Day campaign recognizing Nevadans that have gone above and beyond to help their fellow citizens in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognized medical professionals, first responders, school teachers, grocery clerks, citizens standing up donation drives and many more.*

*As the state continues to reopen, I am excited to launch a new campaign tonight to recognize Nevada businesses that are following directive guidelines to stop the spread of COVID-19.*

*Tonight, we launch the Battle Born Business campaign to highlight the businesses taking creative and safe measures to stay safe to stay open.*

*Please send nominations with a photo and brief explanation for the nomination to [BattleBornBizNV@gmail.com](mailto:BattleBornBizNV@gmail.com). That's [BattleBornBizNV@gmail.com](mailto:BattleBornBizNV@gmail.com).*

*At this time I'd like to take a moment to recognize some great Nevadans. My staff and I have briefed numerous business leaders, medical professionals, gaming executives and labor groups.*

*From Chambers of Commerce to construction workers, to gaming executives and hospitality employees, I want to thank you for your understanding, support and commitment to our shared mission... keeping Nevada open, keeping Nevada strong, and keeping Nevadans and our guests as safe and healthy as possible.*

*I'm asking Nevadans tonight to unify in an effort to move forward. Republicans, Democrats, left and right, business owners and workers, lets do*

*what's necessary to not only keep our economy open, but hopefully allow us to go full throttle in the future, safely and successfully. Anything less than our total commitment will lead to the terrible consequences we've all seen in other parts of our nation and the world.*

*Thank you. I will now take some questions.*

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