



Press Release

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY JUDGE
Chambers County, Texas – June 24, 2020

For General Questions Contact: 409-267-2440
For Health-Related Questions Contact: 409-267-2731
Direct All Media Inquiries to: 409-267-2695

Chambers County Judge Jimmy Sylvia Orders Businesses to Require Masks

Chambers County Judge Jimmy Sylvia issued Executive Order JS-7 mandating that all businesses require the wearing of face masks beginning Thursday, June 25, 2020.

"The number of confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 is rising rapidly and we just reported our first deaths," said Judge Sylvia. "We all have to take action to contain the spread of this disease."

According to Judge Sylvia's Order, all commercial entities providing goods or services directly to the public must require that all employees or visitors wear face coverings within areas where they will be in close contact or proximity to others.

"I understand that this may be an unpopular decision," said the Judge. "We are doing everything we can to keep businesses open, though, and this is a step that we have to take to do that."

All Chambers County residents over the age of 10-years-old are required to wear a face covering over their mouth and nose when in a business or when working in close proximity to others, except:

- When exercising outside or engaging in physical activity outside;
- While driving alone or with passengers who are part of the same household as the driver;
- When doing so poses a greater mental or physical health, safety or security risk;
- While pumping gas or operating outdoor equipment;
- While in a building or activity that requires security surveillance or screening (i.e. banks); or
- When consuming food or drink.

Acceptable face coverings include homemade masks, scarfs, bandanas or a handkerchief. It is strongly recommended that people do not obtain or wear medical masks or N-95 respirators, as they are a needed resource for healthcare providers and first responders.

"Please remember: face coverings are not a replacement for social distancing, frequent hand washing and self-isolation when sick," continued Judge Sylvia.

Residents should maintain the following habits while in public:

- Washing hands before you leave home and when you return;
- Staying at least six feet away from others;
- Avoiding touching nose or face;
- Not using disposable masks more than three times; and
- Washing reusable cloth masks regularly to prevent the spread of the virus.

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Chambers County Judge's Executive Order FAQ

1. When does this Executive Order go into effect?
 - a. The Judge's Executive Order becomes active at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, June 25, 2020 and remains active until 11:59 p.m. on June 30 unless extended, modified or terminated early by Chambers County Judge Jimmy Sylvia.
2. What entities have to require masks?
 - a. All commercial entities in Chambers County providing goods or services directly to the public must require that all employees and visitors to the business' premises or other facilities wear face coverings.
3. Where, exactly, must businesses require face masks to be worn?
 - a. Face covers must be worn on the premises of all businesses in areas which will necessarily involve close contact or proximity to coworkers or the public.
4. Who all has to wear a mask?
 - a. All people 10 years or older shall wear a face covering over their mouth and nose, except:
 - i. When exercising or engaging in physical activity outside;
 - ii. When driving alone or with passengers who are part of the same household as the driver;
 - iii. When doing so poses a greater mental or physical health, safety or security risk;
 - iv. While pumping gas or operating outdoor equipment;
 - v. While in a building or activity that requires security surveillance or screening (i.e. banks); or
 - vi. When consuming food and drink.
5. Masks are not required while consuming food and drink, does this mean that restaurants don't have to require masks?
 - a. Per Judge Sylvia's Executive Order, all restaurants in Chambers County must require their employees to wear masks when working in areas where they are in close proximity to coworkers or members of the public.
 - b. Clients should wear masks while waiting to be seated and in all common areas of the restaurant, such as bathrooms. Clients do not, however, have to wear masks while seated at their tables.
6. What type of face coverings are acceptable?
 - a. Homemade masks, scarfs, bandanas or handkerchiefs are all acceptable face coverings.
7. Should I wear a medical mask or N-95 respirator?
 - a. It is strongly recommended that people not obtain or wear medical masks or N-95 respirators as they are a needed resource for healthcare providers and first responders.
8. What is the penalty for businesses who do not require employees and members of the public to wear masks?
 - a. Businesses who fail to comply with the Judge's Order could face a fine of up to \$1,000.

9. Do organizations like churches have to require masks?
 - a. No, those entities who do not provide goods or services are not required to wear masks. They are, however, subject to the Governor's Guidelines to Reopen Texas. (Guidelines available at gov.texas.gov/opentexas)