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Tommy Gonzalez

CITY COUNCIL

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Alexandra Annello

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Cassandra Hernandez

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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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COVID-19 UPDATE

State Mandates Face Coverings, City Amends Local Directive

EL PASO, Texas — The City of El Paso has amended the Local Emergency Directive in response to Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order issued today, Thursday, July 2, 2020 mandating face coverings, stating that COVID-19 poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the State of Texas.

Every person in Texas is mandated to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth when inside a commercial entity or other building or space open to the public. They must also wear a face covering when in an outdoor public space, wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household.

"As positive COVID-19 cases continue to rise, the Governor's recent order reaffirms the importance of face coverings in slowing the spread of this virus," said El Paso Mayor Dee Margo. "This holiday weekend, let us think of our community, and remain vigilant in covering our faces, washing our hands frequently and practice social distancing."

The face-covering requirement does not apply to the following:

- Persons younger than 2 years of age
- Persons with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering
- While consuming food or drink, or is seated at a restaurant to eat or drink
- While exercising outdoors or engaging in physical activity outdoors, and maintaining a safe distance from other people not in the same household
- While driving alone or with passengers who are part of the same household as the driver
- Persons obtaining a service that requires temporary removal of the face covering for security surveillance, screening, or a need for specific access to the face, such as visiting a bank or while obtaining a personal care service involving the face
- While in a swimming pool, lake or similar body of water
- While voting, assisting a voter, serving as a poll watcher, or actively administering an election (but wearing a face covering is strongly encouraged)
- While actively providing or obtaining access to religious worship (but wearing a face covering is strongly encouraged)
- While giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience

Face coverings are required for any person attending a protest or demonstration involving more than 10 people, and when unable to practice six-feet of social distancing from other people not in the same household.

To report non-compliance, call El Paso Police Department non-emergency at (915) 832-4400. Any violation after a warning of the individual face-covering requirement, of the amended Local Emergency Directive is punishable by a fine not to exceed \$250.

—more—



Promoting **Transparent & Consistent Communication** Among All Members of the Community



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While face coverings are now mandated by the State, wearing a face covering should not be seen as a substitute for maintaining 6-foot social distancing and hand washing, as these remain important steps to slowing the spread of the virus.

Businesses remain responsible for complying with Health & Safety Policy provisions of the Local Emergency Directive.

Additionally, parades must limit the number of participants to 10 individuals or less, unless prior approval from the Mayor is obtained, and are required to follow the Local Public Health Authority Order regarding parades, which is found at <http://epstrong.org/health-orders.php>.

The City's amended directive also prohibits outdoor gathering in excess of 10 people unless prior approval from the Mayor is obtained.

The updated Local Directive once completed and executed will be made available at www.epstrong.org under "Health Orders." Anyone with questions about the Local Emergency Directive can call 3-1-1.

The public is reminded that even infected persons with little to no symptoms can spread the virus to others and the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions.

For more information, visit www.epstrong.org.

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