

GRUNDY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

December 9, 2020
For Immediate Release

“Grundy County Health Department Issues Public Health Order”

The Grundy County Health Department and Grundy County Health Officer Elizabeth Gibson have issued a Public Health Order effective Friday, December 11.

According to the Order:

- Except as otherwise provided in this Public Health Order all persons age ten years old and above who are present within the jurisdiction of the County of Grundy are required to wear a clean Face Covering or Mask any time they are, or will be, in contact with other people who are not household members.
- All public facilities and businesses that are open to the public shall post a sign at all entrances that face coverings or masks are required to be worn inside the facility or business.

The full text of the Order will be available on the Grundy County Health Department website:
www.GrundyCountyHealth.org.

“Grundy County Health Department Medical Director, Dr. Jennifer Bowe, Wright Memorial Hospital, and other local healthcare providers reached out to the Health Department asking us to consider enacting a Mask Order for Grundy County due to the rising number of cases and hospitalizations. Hospitals throughout our region are near their maximum capacity, threatening the health of all Grundy County residents. Once we understood the seriousness of the situation at our area hospitals, doing nothing was not an option. The Health Department has the authority to issue Public Health orders and it is our duty to support the work of our local healthcare providers and emergency services personnel in every way we can.

“The intent of this order is to work with local businesses, organizations, and individuals to create safer environments for all residents and visitors. We hope the people of Grundy County will support our healthcare providers, schools, and businesses by increasing their personal vigilance and wearing masks when they are around others. Widespread mask usage is proven to reduce the spread of COVID-19,” said Elizabeth Gibson of the Grundy County Health Department.

Other strategies effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19 are:

- Stay home if you are ill, even if your symptoms feel mild
- Practice social distancing and avoid group gatherings
- Wash your hands often
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces

Grundy County is currently in Category 1: Extreme Risk according to Governor Parson’s Public Health Warning issued on November 19. Criteria for Risk Categories can be found here:
<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/pdf/advisory-20201119.pdf>



12-08-2020

Grundy County COVID-19 Public Health Order & Guidance

AS ORDERED BY THE GRUNDY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

AN EMERGENCY PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER ESTABLISHING THE REQUIREMENT TO WEAR A FACE MASK IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS IN ORDER TO PREVENT OR LIMIT THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19 DISEASE.

WHEREAS, the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a highly infectious and dangerous disease that on March 11, 2020 was declared by the World Health Organization to be a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, due to the COVID-19 pandemic there have been declarations of emergency enacted by the President of the United States, the Governor of the State of Missouri, the Grundy County Commission; and

WHEREAS, due to the rapid spread and the existence of community transmission of COVID-19 within the State of Missouri, the spread of COVID-19 will continue to grow at an exponential rate for the foreseeable future unless additional measures are implemented to reduce the spread of the disease in Grundy County, and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is overwhelming the medical system thereby threatening the health and lives of all residents; and

WHEREAS, due to the escalating spread of the COVID-19 pandemic it is necessary for the immediate preservation of public health, safety and welfare of the residents of Grundy County to take steps to mitigate the spread of the disease; and

WHEREAS, the key transmission method for the COVID-19 virus is through respiratory droplets that people expel when they breathe, speak, cough or sneeze; and

WHEREAS, people can be infected with the COVID-19 virus and be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic but still be contagious to others; and

WHEREAS, numerous epidemiologists have found that widespread use of a face covering or masks is necessary to prevent the more rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus; and

WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that members of the public, when they need to interact with others outside the home, and especially in indoor settings should cover their mouth and nose to prevent inadvertently spreading COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the wearing of a face covering or mask by patrons and employees to the greatest extent possible may allow businesses to remain open while protecting the health and safety of the public and employees and keeping the local economy strong and our schools open during the period in which the disease is being brought under control in the community; and

WHEREAS, the Grundy County Health Department finds that wearing a Face Covering or Mask is an appropriate and necessary method of reducing the spread of COVID-19 and will be the **least restrictive means** imposed with the greatest benefit to reduce community spread; and

WHEREAS, strict use of face coverings or masks may limit the spread of COVID-19 to such an extent that further Stay at Home Orders may not be needed; and

WHEREAS, the Grundy County Health Department, acting in accordance with Chapter 192 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, deem it is in the best interest of public health for individuals to practice social distancing and use the additional precaution of face coverings or masks while in public contact with other persons and finds it is necessary to enact this PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER which shall be effective beginning December 11 at 12:01 am.

Effective December 11, 2020 at 12:01 am

Except as otherwise provided in this Public Health Order, all persons age ten years old and above who are present within the jurisdiction of the County of Grundy are required to wear a clean Face Covering or Mask any time they are, or will be, in contact with other people who are not household members.

As used in this Order, a “**Face Covering or Mask**” means a covering made of cloth, fabric, or other soft or permeable material, without holes, that covers only the nose and mouth and surrounding areas of the lower face. Medical grade masks are not required; coverings may be fashioned from gators, bandanas or other materials. A covering that hides or obscures the wearer's eyes or forehead is not a Face Mask. A Face Mask may be factory-made, or may be handmade and improvised from ordinary household materials.

All public facilities and businesses that are open to the public shall post a sign at all entrances that face coverings or masks are required to be worn inside the facility or business.

EXCEPTIONS for the Face Covering or Mask requirement are as follows:

1. While outdoors when able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others
2. While exercising indoors when able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others
3. When engaged in a sporting activity
4. While at home and exclusively in the presence of members of their own household, provided however, the wearing of a Face Covering or Mask shall be required in all common areas of any multifamily structure
5. When in your or your family's personal vehicle
6. While eating or drinking only when inside or in the outside dining area of a restaurant or other establishment that offers food or beverage service
7. Persons who fall into the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance for those who should not wear face coverings due to a medical condition, mental health condition, developmental disability, or are otherwise covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act
8. When any party to a communication is deaf or hard of hearing and not wearing a Face Covering or Mask is essential to communication
9. While obtaining a service that requires temporary removal of the Face Covering or Mask, such as medical or dental examinations
10. When necessary to confirm the individual's identity

11. When federal or state law prohibits wearing a Face Covering or Mask or requires the removal of a Face Covering or Mask
12. When requested by a law enforcement officer
13. When requested by a medical provider, including emergency response personnel
14. When in a business/commercial/office setting and not within six feet of any other person, provided however, when moving from place to place in a business location where the person cannot maintain at all times a distance of six feet from all other persons, a Face Covering or Mask shall be worn
15. Under such other circumstances identified in any subsequent order, formal guidance or approved Operational Plan issued by the County Health Department and in general conformance with the spirit and intent of this declaration, and
16. Persons working in settings which might increase the risk of heat-related illnesses.
17. Children under the age of ten (10). Children ages three (3) to ten (10) are strongly encouraged, but not required to wear a face covering, while under direct supervision of an adult.

Violation of this Order constitutes a threat to the public health and shall be in violation of RSMO 192.300 (4).

The requirement to wear a Face Covering or Mask shall go into effect on December 11 at 12:01 am and remain in effect for the next 60 days and will be reviewed monthly thereafter.

Elizabeth Gibson

Administrator / Public Health Officer

Grundy County Health Department

Grundy County, Missouri