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PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Abbott issues statewide face mask order

Kerrville, Texas (July 1, 2020) – Texas Governor Greg Abbott today issued a new executive order requiring face masks, but with many exceptions, and a proclamation lowering the threshold for outdoor gatherings to 10.

The face mask order is effective beginning 12:01 Friday, July 3. The Governor cited the increase in positive cases, positivity rate, and hospitalization for his mask requirement, which he suggested is a “targeted response”, the “least restrictive means” for the reducing the spread, and to avoid “more extreme measures”. If people follow this requirement, the Governor writes that “more extreme measures may be avoided.”

As for the mask requirement, every person shall wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when inside a commercial entity or other building or space open to the public, or 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. The following are the exceptions:

1. persons younger than 10;
2. persons with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering;
3. persons at a restaurant to eat or drink;
4. persons exercising outdoors and maintaining a safe distance from other people not in the same household;
5. persons while the person is driving alone or with passengers who are part of the same household as the driver;
6. persons obtaining a service that requires removal for security surveillance, screening, etc., but only to the extent necessary for the temporary removal;
7. persons while the person is in a swimming pool, lake, or similar body of water;
8. persons voting, serving as a poll watcher, or actively administering an election, but wearing a face covering is strongly encouraged;
9. persons who are actively providing or obtaining access to religious worship, but wearing a face covering is strongly encouraged;
10. persons while the person is giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience; or
11. persons in a county (a) that meets the requisite criteria from TDEM regarding minimal cases AND whose county judge has affirmatively opted out. HOWEVER, the Governor's order states that wearing a mask is still highly recommended and every county is strongly encouraged to follow these standards.

Not excepted from this face-covering requirement is any person attending a protest or demonstration involving more than 10 people and who is not practicing safe social distancing of six feet from other people not in the same household.

Enforcement begins with a written warning, followed by fines not to exceed \$250. The Governor called on local law enforcement to enforce this order.