

Austin-Travis County extends “Stay Home – Work Safe” orders, mandates fabric face coverings

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CITY OF AUSTIN

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Stay Home-Work Safe Order extended to May 8; fabric face coverings must be worn in public

Austin, Texas – The City of Austin and Travis County are extending their “[Stay Home – Work Safe](#)” orders until May 8 to take effect following the expiration of the first version on April 13 at 11:59 p.m. A key addition to the order extension will be the requirement that the public wear fabric face coverings when conducting essential work or activities.

Everyone over the age of ten must wear a face covering over their nose and mouth when in a public building, using public transportation or ride shares, pumping gas and while outside when six feet of physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained. A face covering is not required when eating, riding in a personal vehicle, alone in a separate single space, or in the presence of other members of your residence. Additionally, a face covering is not required when wearing one poses a greater mental or physical health, safety or security risk such as anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.

“Face coverings are another key piece in flattening the curve,” said Austin-Travis County Interim Health Authority Dr. Mark Escott. “It is critical that the public understand that this will not only help in slowing the spread of the disease, but face coverings are also part of our foreseeable future to safely reopen our society.”

A face covering does not substitute for the need to maintain physical distancing and the Stay Home-Work Safe Order. The additional requirement is for use of fabric face coverings and not medical-grade masks or N-95 respirators, which are in short supply and should be conserved for healthcare workers and first responders. Scarves or bandannas are easy, household items that can serve as a face covering. Plenty of do-it-yourself plans are also available online including [guidance](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and [guidance](#) from Austin Public Health (APH).

Essential businesses will be provided [signage](#) and additional support to enforce the face covering requirement over the coming days. While violation of this Order is a criminal offense, enforcement of this Order is substantially reliant on self-regulation and a community commitment to public health and safety under the novel threat of COVID-19. If there is not widespread compliance with this Order, enforcement efforts will be increased.

“Our extended orders carry a very simple message, cover your nose and mouth when out in public to save lives,” said Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt. “Wearing a face covering in addition to the other steps the public has been taking are essential to support our community and keep everyone healthy.”

The updated orders closely mirror those of Governor Greg Abbott and his definitions of essential businesses that can operate during this time.

“I continue to be impressed with the resiliency and the spirit of our Austin community,” said Austin Mayor Steve Adler. “We’ve done so well, and now we have to do more. Wearing face coverings, that can be made at home from things around the house, will help protect store clerks and those around us. Let’s take care of each other.”

The orders also add direction for individuals living in a household where someone is currently being tested for or has tested positive for COVID-19. It requires anyone living in that house to isolate until cleared by the health authority.

Additionally, fabric stores are now considered an essential business for the sole purpose of selling fabric and supplies necessary for the creation of fabric face coverings. The stores are subject to physical distancing requirements. The updated orders specify that fabric stores should limit the number of customers and staff inside the store at one time to no more than ten people, and establish sufficient spacing for queuing inside and outside of the business.

For more information and updates, visit www.AustinTexas.gov/COVID19.

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