

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 05/27/2020**

TO: Grant County healthcare providers, infection control staff, supervisory nursing staff, clinic management, school nurses.

Grant County Emergency Management

Grant County Mayors

Grant County Media

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## **Health Officer Directive – Face Covering Directive**



**Phase 2**

Grant County, WA – After much consideration, research, and consultation, Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny is issuing a Health Officer Directive mandating this use of face coverings in some public settings. This is one easy effort to assist with reducing the spread of COVID-19 as the County opens up to more public interactions in Phase 2 of the Safe Start Washington plan. “A sudden surge of cases of COVID-19 in Grant County could put the county residents back in Phase 1. I am urging and asking all Grant County residents and guests to assist our public health efforts to keep the county in Phase 2 and plan for Phase 3,” urges Health Officer Dr. Alexander Brzezny.

There is rising evidence that face coverings reduces the spread of the virus in settings outside of the home, such as settings where it is not possible to maintain 6 feet distance between yourself and others. Investigations of people diagnosed with COVID-19 are demonstrating that 50% patients have few to no symptoms. These “super spreaders” are not aware that they have the virus and are passing it along to others. A simple face covering on their face has the power to save lives of people they care about and people in their community. “Wearing a mask is not about protecting yourself it is about protecting those around you. It truly is about everyone else and is selfless act of kindness,” states Theresa Adkinson, Grant County Health District Administrator.

GCHD staff understand it’s not fun, it can even feel awkward to live with the new normal of wearing a mask when you’re going to the store, getting your hair cut, or going to church again! However, this will help get the county to the next Phase and return to our lives just a bit more.

The Health Officer Directive applies to any indoor or confined public setting where a person will be within six feet of another individual, who does not share the same household, and includes, but is not limited to the following sectors:

- Groceries, pharmacies, and other retail that sells food and beverage products, including but not limited to grocery stores, corner stores, and convenience stores (including liquor stores that sell food), farmers' markets, food banks, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, "big box" stores that sell groceries and essentials, and similar food retail establishments.
- Commercial retail stores that supply essential sectors, including convenience stores, pet supply stores, auto supplies and repair, hardware and home improvement, garden stores and indoor sales for nurseries that support food cultivation and production, office supply stores that support working-from-home, and home appliance retailers.
- Restaurants, food carry-out, quick-serve food operations—including food preparation, carry-out, and delivery food employees.
- Cannabis retail and dietary supplement retail stores; liquor, tobacco, and vapor retail stores.
- Hair and nails salons and barbers.
- Real estate locations (including in-office, vehicle, house demonstrations, if necessary).
- Veterinary care and pet grooming services.
- In-home domestic services (nannies, housecleaning, etc.).
- Buses, light rail, and other forms of public transportation.
- Agricultural work and housing.
- Food and produce processing (frozen processing, produce sorting and packing, etc.).
- Any indoor manufacturing and indoor construction and remodeling.

The following individuals may be excluded from this Directive:

- Any child aged two years or less;
- Any child aged 12 years or less unless parents and caregivers supervise the use of face coverings by children to avoid misuse;
- Any individual who has a physical disability that prevents easily wearing or removing a face covering;
- Any individual who is deaf and uses facial and mouth movements as part of communication, or an individual who is communicating with a person who is deaf and uses facial and mouth movements as part of communication;
- Any individual who has been advised by a medical professional that wearing a face covering may pose a risk to that individual for health related reasons;
- Any individual who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

Want to learn more about why face coverings work? Check out these scientific journal articles.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2764955>

<https://royalsociety.org/news/2020/05/delve-group-publishes-evidence-paper-on-use-of-face-masks/>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0843-2>