



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JAMES R. BENJAMIN, JR., *County Attorney*
Office of Law

INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE

Number: BCo-COVID19-005

Date: July 23, 2020

Re: Baltimore County Health Department Directive and Order for Face Coverings in Indoor Public Spaces dated July 23, 2020

The Health Officer for Baltimore County issued an amended Health Directive and Order (“Directive”) on July 23, 2020 concerning protocols for face coverings in indoor public spaces. The Directive went into effect immediately.

Baltimore County’s Office of Law (“OOL”) has received requests for guidance from local businesses and organizations about how to interpret this Directive. OOL will publish its responses to requests for guidance which could apply to multiple businesses and organizations. OOL will update this document as it issues additional responses to requests for guidance.

At this time, OOL recommends that the Directive be interpreted as follows:

1. **Individuals 2 years of age and older shall wear a face covering when in any indoor public space.** This means that for any establishment that has opened back up to the general public, face coverings must be used if an individual is 2 years of age or older. This includes, but is not limited to, retail establishments; religious facilities (houses of worship); personal service establishments; food service establishments; indoor recreational establishments, including but not limited to bingo halls, bowling alleys, pool halls, roller and ice skating rings, social and fraternal clubs; indoor swimming pools; and fitness centers.

Regarding indoor swimming pools, a face covering must be worn at all times before one enters the pool and after one exits the pool. A face covering does not need to be worn while in the pool.

Regarding fitness centers, face coverings must be worn inside fitness centers at all times when a person is not engaging in **vigorous** exercise. Face coverings may be removed **only if** a person is engaged in **vigorous** exercise and the placement of the exercise equipment and a person’s body while performing the vigorous exercise is such that social distancing (a distance of 6 feet or more between persons) can be achieved. It is strongly encouraged that any vigorous exercise be done outside when possible.

Guidance and clarification has been requested for the use of face coverings by young children at non-public schools, child care centers and at youth camps. Non-public schools, child care facilities and youth camps should continue to follow guidance issued by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Health.

Guidance for the use of face coverings at non-public schools is here:
<http://marylandpublicschools.org/newsroom/Pages/COVID-19/index.aspx>.

Guidance for the use of face coverings at child care centers is here:
<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/covid-faqs>.

Guidance for the use of face coverings at youth camps is here:
<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OEHFP/CHS/Shared%20Documents/Youth%20Camps/MDH%20Order%20-%20Amended%20Youth%20Camps%2006.12.20.pdf>

2. Individuals 2 years of age and older are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering while in outdoor public spaces when maintaining a physical distance of six (6) feet or more from persons who are not members of the same household or residence is not feasible.

3. The following are **exemptions** to Paragraph 1:

- a. Individuals who cannot wear a face covering (as defined in Governor's Executive Order No. 20-04-15-01) due to a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability;
- b. Individuals who are communicating or seeking to communicate with someone where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication; or
- c. Individuals at food service establishments while eating or drinking, which shall all be subject to the same existing regulations and exceptions previously in place under the Governor's Executive Orders and the Health Officer Orders of the Maryland Department of Health ("MDH") including, but not limited to, Governor's Executive Order Nos. 20-06-10-01 and 20-04-15-01, associated issued guidance "Maryland Roadmap to Recovery, Best Practices for Opening Restaurants and Bars", MDH Order 20.20.06.10.01, and Baltimore County Executive Orders including, but not limited to Executive Order 2020-11, and all previously issued Baltimore County Health Directives/Orders. In addition, all non-seated parties, must wear a face covering when moving in or about a restaurant or bar premises.

4. Individuals are not required to show documentation that an exception applies.

5. All establishments that have opened back up to the general public should have appropriate social distancing measures in place which are consistent with CDC and Maryland Department of Health guidelines.