

With Cases Rising Rapidly, North Carolina Tightens Existing Mask Requirements and Enforcement

News Release Date

11-23-2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 23, 2020

With Cases Rising Rapidly, North Carolina Tightens Existing Mask Requirements and Enforcement

Ten More Counties Designated as Red for Critical Community Spread

RALEIGH: Governor Roy Cooper today issued additional COVID-19 safety measures to tighten mask requirements and enforcement as cases continue to rise rapidly in North Carolina and across the country. Executive Order No. 180 goes into effect on Wednesday, November 25 and runs through Friday, December 11.

"I have a stark warning for North Carolinians today: We are in danger," Governor Cooper said. "This is a pivotal moment in our fight against the coronavirus. Our actions now will determine the fate of many."

In addition to extending Phase 3 capacity limits and safety requirements, the Order tightens the existing statewide mask requirement – making it clear that everyone needs to wear a mask whenever they are with someone who is not from the same household. The Order also adds the mask requirement to several additional settings including any public indoor space even when maintaining 6 feet of distance; gyms even when exercising; all schools public and private; and all public or private transportation when travelling with people outside of the household.

The Order also requires large retail businesses with more than 15,000 square feet to have an employee stationed near entrances ensuring mask wearing and implementing occupancy limits for patrons who enter.

Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, updated North Carolina's COVID-19 [County Alert System map](#) due to the rapid rise in cases and hospitalization over the past week. Since introducing the system last week, ten more counties have moved into the red category indicating critical community spread. There are now 20 red counties and 42 orange counties. Read the [update](#) to see where each county stands and how the system was designed.

"The coming weeks will be a true test of our resolve to do what it takes to keep people from getting sick, to save lives, and to make sure that if you need hospital care whether it's for a heart attack or a car accident or COVID-19, you can get it," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D.

Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan spoke at today's press conference to discuss what the city of Greensboro is doing to step up enforcement of existing, strong statewide safety rules. State officials have encouraged local governments to take action to require compliance and help lower COVID-19 numbers.

Dr. Cohen also provided an update on North Carolina's data and trends.

Trajectory in COVID-Like Illness (CLI) Surveillance Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's syndromic surveillance trend for COVID-like illness is increasing.

Trajectory of Confirmed Cases Over 14 Days

- North Carolina's trajectory of cases is increasing.