



Chatham County Board of Commissioners

124 Bull Street, Savannah, GA 31401

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

July 31, 2020

Chatham County Issues a County-wide State of Emergency Requiring the Use of Masks or Face Coverings

Chatham County, GA (July 31, 2020) – Chatham County Board of Commission Chairman Al Scott issued a County-wide State of Emergency that will go into effect at 12:01 A.M. on August 1, 2020. The County-wide State of Emergency orders that all persons wear a mask or face covering in public spaces to include commercial establishments, public places, government buildings, and any time people gather in groups of 10 or more. Masks or face coverings are required to properly cover the nose and mouth.

All restaurants, retail stores, salons, grocery stores, pharmacies, and other establishments must require employees to wear masks or face coverings at all times when having face-to-face interactions with the public.

Masks or face coverings are also required in religious services and are to be self-regulated.

Physical/social distance of six feet between persons is required to the extent that it is possible. Additionally, everyone is to wash their hands with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer regularly.

In late March, Chatham County ranked 23rd in COVID-19 cases within the State of Georgia. Recent weeks have seen an increase in infection rates and a spike in positive cases; consequently, Chatham County now ranks 6th.

“This increase along with the rise in hospitalizations locally calls for us to take action,” said Chairman Al Scott. “I have spoken with all the Mayors and the Director of the Coastal Health District and we are in agreement masks or face coverings need to be worn to help protect the residents and visitors of our County. Even with the majority of our residents and visitors wearing masks, it could take eight weeks to slow the spread of COVID-19.”

The order also outlines the circumstances in which a person does not have to wear a mask or face covering.

- a) When wearing a mask or face covering causes or aggravates health conditions;
- b) When wearing a mask or face covering would prevent receiving personal services;
- c) When a person is five years old or younger;
- d) While engaged in an organized sports activity sponsored by a school, the County or a municipality within Chatham County and the sponsored sports activity is conducted in a manner that meets or exceeds the standard set forth by the school, County or City league requirements.

Commercial establishments that have continuous and repeated infractions will be declared a public nuisance and the business may be shut down through the duration of this order. Violation of this order by any person is a misdemeanor and punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500. Each day an establishment is in violation or fails to comply with this order, will be considered a separate violation.

Under the order, municipalities can impose a more restrictive order as it relates to COVID-19. This order will remain in effect until September 30, 2020, unless further modified or rescinded.

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