



The Navajo Nation  
Office of the President and Vice President

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 17, 2020

**Navajo Nation issues Public Health Emergency Order requiring protective masks to be worn in public to help fight the spread of COVID-19**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — On Friday, the Navajo Department of Health issued Public Health Emergency Order 2020-007, requiring all individuals on the Navajo Nation to wear protective masks in public to help prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

During online town hall sessions this week, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez informed the public that the written order would be issued. He also encouraged all residents of the Navajo Nation to either purchase or make masks to comply with the order.

“Even before the Center for Disease Control and Prevention officially recommended using masks in public, we were encouraging our Navajo people to wear masks and gloves and now we’re putting it in writing. Some may not like it, but with the number of positive COVID-19 cases increasing, we have to be proactive in addressing the pandemic. We will continue to consider even more aggressive requirements to help bring the numbers down. Some individuals think we’re using scare tactics or extreme measures, but we are losing lives here on the Navajo Nation and I’m going to do everything I can to help save lives. We are on a mission to flatten the curve,” said President Nez.

The Public Health Emergency Order defines a mask as a covering designed to filter one’s breathing through both the nose and mouth. A mask must snugly cover the face around the nose and mouth to prevent the wearer from breathing unfiltered air. May be a commercially-made face mask, or a homemade cloth face covering.

“Since the pandemic began, we are seeing more and more people wearing masks and protective gloves in public and that’s a good sign that people are listening to the health care experts. We aren’t the health experts, but as leaders, we are using our voices to get the word out so that our people are aware of the precautionary measures they can take to protect themselves. Wearing a mask doesn’t guarantee that a person won’t contract COVID-19 – we continue to strongly recommend that everyone stay home as much as possible,” stated Vice President Myron Lizer.

The Navajo Nation’s 57-hour weekend curfew is currently in effect until Monday, April 20 at 5:00 a.m. (MDT). The Navajo Police Department is enforcing the weekend curfew with road

checkpoints. They will also issue citations for curfew violators, which may include up to \$1,000 in fines and/or 30 days in jail.

The requirement for wearing a mask in public will remain in effect until otherwise ended by a subsequent Public Health Emergency Order. For more information about protective masks, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

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**PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER  
NAVAJO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
NAVAJO OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION PROGRAM**

**April 17, 2020**

**Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-007**

**Public Health Emergency Order Mandating Use of Masks in Public Due to COVID-19**

- I. Paragraphs I – IX from Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-004 are incorporated herein, addressing the various Navajo Nation (Nation) authorities related to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.
- II. The intent and purpose of this Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-007 is to prevent community spread of COVID-19 on the Nation.

**THEREFORE, NOTICE IS GIVEN** that, pursuant to the power and authority set forth in the NDOH enabling legislation (NNC Resolution No. CO-50-14), taken together with the plans of operation for NDOH, the Navajo Division of Public Health Services (NDPHS), and the Navajo Office of Environmental Health and Protection Program (NOEHPP), in conjunction with the Navajo Nation Public Health State of Emergency Declaration (CEM Resolution No. 20-03-11) and all Navajo Nation Public Health Emergency Orders and Executive Orders related to COVID-19:

A. All individuals two (2) years of age and older on the Nation shall wear **masks** while in **public**, as those terms are defined herein.

B. Definitions:

1. **Mask:** a covering designed to filter one's breathing through both the nose and mouth. A mask must snugly cover the face around the nose and mouth to prevent the wearer from breathing unfiltered air. May be a commercially-made face mask, or a homemade cloth face covering such as those found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
2. **Public:** any area outside your home where you could come within 6 feet of someone who is not from your household.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that the public must take the following preventive precautions:

1. **All persons on the Navajo Nation should leave their residence or home site areas only if necessary.**

2. Socially distance yourselves. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Keep at least six feet from others and wear a mask in public.

3. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

4. To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, etc. Wear gloves or use a barrier such as a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hands or fingers if you must touch something.

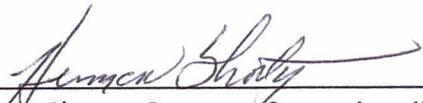
5. Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, mouth. Cover your mouth and nose with the best-available protective material, including masks, when in public.

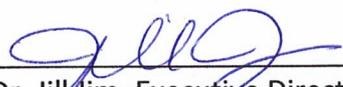
6. Clean and disinfect your home and vehicles to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, steering wheels, door handles, gearshifts, and cell phones).

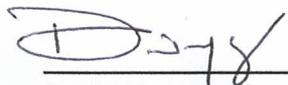
7. Avoid all public gatherings and unnecessary travel.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that this Order shall take effect Friday, April 17, 2020 at 8:00 P.M MDT, and shall remain in effect until otherwise ended by a subsequent Public Health Emergency Order.

**ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES AND ORDERS WILL FOLLOW AS CONDITIONS WARRANT. SO ORDERED THIS 17<sup>th</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2020.**

  
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