



Media Release

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Face Coverings Now Required in City of West Plains

To help slow the spread of COVID-19, face coverings are now mandatory in the City of West Plains after West Plains City Council voted in favor of the mandate 3-2 Wednesday evening.

The ordinance, which goes into effect immediately and runs through February 2, requires clean face coverings for all people age 10 and older in the City of West Plains. However, the ordinance allows West Plains Mayor Jack Pahlmann to suspend enforcement of the ordinance if the 14-day positivity rate falls below five percent for seven consecutive days.

There are exceptions to the face covering requirement. A person may remove their face covering under the following circumstances:

- While outdoors when able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others;
- While exercising outdoors or while exercising indoors when able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others;
- When engaged in a sporting activity;
- While at home and exclusively in the presence of members of their own household; provided however, the wearing of a Face Covering shall be required in all common areas of any multifamily structure;
- When in your or your family's personal vehicle;
- While eating or drinking only when inside or in the outside dining area of a restaurant or other establishment that offers food or beverage service, provided that person is able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from persons seated at other tables, and provided this distance restriction is enforced by the restaurant or other establishment;
- When an individual has a medical condition, mental health condition or disability that prevents wearing a Face Covering;
- When any party to a communication is deaf or hard of hearing and not wearing a Face Covering is essential to communication;
- While obtaining a service that requires temporary removal of the Face Covering, such as dental examinations;
- When necessary to confirm the individual's identity;

- When federal or state law prohibits wearing a Face Covering or requires the removal of a Face Covering;
- When requested by a law enforcement officer;
- When requested by a medical provider, including emergency response personnel;
- When at any business where there are ten or fewer people present at said business, provided that such persons maintain at least six feet of distance between each other;
- When a business/commercial/office setting has implemented alternative mitigation strategies such as proper hygiene, social distancing of at least six feet, the use of plexiglass barriers and/or face shields;
- When participating in a wedding ceremony as a member of the wedding party;
- When a public safety officer is responding to an emergency.
- Under such other circumstances identified in any subsequent order, formal guidance or approved Operational Plan issued by the Mayor and in general conformance with the spirit and intent of this ordinance.

The Mayor specifically encourages the enforcement of the ordinance, which will be administered by education and an opportunity for voluntary compliance. The next measures include a warning, and a civil citation. If convicted, a fine could be assessed not to exceed \$100. People are asked to call the West Plains Police Department at 256-2244, and not the 911 emergency number.

The full ordinance can be found online at westplains.net by clicking on the red “City of West Plains Face Covering Ordinance” button. Signs for businesses are also available on the website.

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