



Sierra County Health and Human Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sierra County Masking Requirement to Align with State of California's Masking Guidance on February 16, 2022.

Loyalton, CA – February 11, 2022: Sierra County's universal face covering requirement in public settings and workplaces that started with the surge from the Delta variant of the virus that causes COVID-19 will end on February 16, 2022 and will align with the state of California's guidance on masking.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we had few options to slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent our healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed. Today's situation is very different. Although the virus has changed, with Omicron causing less severe disease than previous variants, our preventive measures have also improved. There are now highly effective, safe vaccines for everyone ages five and older, offering protection from severe disease, hospitalization, and death, as well as effective antiviral medications and monoclonal antibody treatments.

The state of California's updated [masking guidance](#) takes effect on February 16. Universal masking shall remain required in only specified settings, including public transit, K-12 schools, childcare, healthcare, correctional, shelter, and long-term care settings. Only unvaccinated persons are required to mask in all indoor public settings. Fully vaccinated individuals are recommended to continue indoor masking when the risk may be high.

Moving away from mandatory indoor masking for all is an early step toward recognition that the virus that causes COVID-19 is not going away, and we must learn to live with it. Learning to live with COVID-19 will involve fewer government mandates and more government recommendations. These recommendations will continue to be provided to support members of the public in making individual decisions based on their own personal circumstances and risk tolerance. People with a lower risk tolerance, perhaps because of underlying medical conditions or age can choose to take additional precautions, such as wearing masks.

Vaccines remain the most effective protection against severe disease from COVID-19. All [unvaccinated residents 5 and older](#) are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated as soon as possible. Everybody 5 and older can make an appointment by going to [My Turn – California COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling & Notifications](#), or by contacting the Health Department at (530) 993-6700 for assistance.

For more information, please go to: <http://sierracounty.ca.gov/COVID-19>
Email: COVID19@sierracounty.ca.gov

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DIRECTIVE OF THE SIERRA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER FOR THE WEARING OF FACE COVERINGS IN WORKPLACES AND PUBLIC SETTINGS

DATE OF ORDER: February 10, 2022

SUMMARY OF THIS ORDER

This Health Officer Directive supersedes and replaces Sierra County Health Officer Order that was effective August 16, 2021. Nothing in this Health Officer Directive supersedes State Executive Orders or State Health Officer Orders or guidance provided by the California Department of Public Health available at: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx# Summary>.

BACKGROUND

Since August 2021, with few interspersed weeks of low transmission, the community transmission level of COVID-19 Delta Variant, in Sierra County, was categorized as “High” based on the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Indicators. As of December 20, 2021, the significantly more transmissible SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.529 (Omicron) has emerged as the predominant strain in the US and locally. While the Omicron variant has been the most predominant strain recently, SARS-CoV-2 B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant of COVID-19 will also likely continue to cause infection in Sierra County. The significant surge in transmission and serious disease due to infection needed stepped up mitigation measures. The most effective measure in addition to vaccination, to control the spread of COVID-19, is masking with well fitted high grade masks. Sierra County Health Officer has continued to maintain the universal indoor local health face covering order throughout the surge of Delta and Omicron.

Sierra County continues to see high transmission of COVID-19. CDC strongly recommends universal indoor face coverings in areas of high COVID-19 transmission regardless of vaccination status. Sierra County Public Health Officer supports these recommendations. However, there are signs that the current Omicron surge is slowing. Cases throughout the state are trending downward. Despite hopeful trends, however, we recognize that new variants of this disease may or may not be fuel for future surges of transmission and infection. We must now apply all the knowledge obtained from the science of COVID-19 and real health experiences to live with COVID-19 and the future variants by being flexible and able to adjust to the conditions. This means that state and local public health will continue to have a role in making recommendations and provide support, while the members of the public will need to make individual decisions based on the level of transmission, their own underlying medical conditions, age, or other indicators of risk. As mandates are lifted, residents are strongly encouraged to follow the recommendations issued by local and/or state health experts.

Therefore, given that COVID will most invariably be with us well into the future, and, given we have proven mitigation measures for generalized infection control we recommend the following mitigation measures:

1. Stay home when sick
2. Wash hands regularly
3. Cover your cough
4. Use well fitted, effective high grade face masks
5. Get vaccinated and keep up to date with all recommended vaccines.
6. Utilize testing to obtain knowledge to prevent spread.
7. If you become infected or sick with COVID-19, contact your health care provider to be evaluated for appropriate, available, and upcoming COVID-19 treatments.

This directive is necessary to control and reduce the rate of community spread and to reinforce the need for safe interventions. The Health Officer will continue to assess the public health situation as it evolves and may modify this Order, or issue additional Orders, related to COVID-19, as changing circumstances dictate.

DIRECTIVE

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, 120175, AND 120220, THE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF SIERRA ("HEALTH OFFICER") HEREBY ISSUES THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIVE:

1. Except as otherwise set forth herein, the February 7, 2022 updated [Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#) issued by the California Department of Public Health ("CDPH"), as may be amended from time to time, continues to apply throughout the County.
2. The Sierra County Health Officer Order from August 13, 2021, and effective August 16, 2021, will be rescinded on February 16, 2022, aligning with and recognizing that the State Health Officer Orders take into consideration the general direction of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Once the Local Face Covering order is no longer in effect, all persons in Sierra County will be subject to the [State Health Officer Order issued June 11, 2021](#) and remain subject to the state [masking guidance](#).
3. CDPH's Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings requires unvaccinated persons to wear a mask in all indoor public settings and recommends that fully vaccinated persons do the same when risk is high. The Guidance also requires all persons, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask indoors in the following settings: public transit, K-12 schools, childcare, healthcare, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and long-term care facilities.
4. Employers and businesses subject to the [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards](#) ("ETS") and/or the [Cal OSHA Aerosol Transmissible Diseases Standards](#) should consult the applicable regulations for additional requirements. The ETS allow local health jurisdictions to mandate more protective measures.
5. All State orders and guidance documents referenced in State orders are complementary to this Order. By way of this Order, the Health Officer adopts such directives as orders as well. Where a conflict exists between a local order and any State public health order related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the most restrictive provision controls pursuant to, and consistent with, California

Health and Safety Code §131080, unless the State Health Officer issues an Order that expressly determines a provision of a local public health order is a menace to public health.

6. This Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 4, 2020, Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor Gavin Newsom, the Declarations of Local Health Emergency issued by the Health Officer on March 20, 2020, The Proclamation of a Local Emergency on March 20, 2020, and the March 20, 2020, Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sierra, Ratifying the Declarations of Local Health Emergency and Local Emergency Proclamation, Governor Newsom's March 12, 2020, Executive Order N25-20, Governor Newsom's March 19, 2020, Executive Order N-33-20.
7. Copies of this Order shall promptly be: 1) made available at the County offices at 202 Front Street, Loyalton, CA 96118 or 22 Maiden Lane, Downieville, CA 95936; 2) posted on the County website (www.sierracounty.ca.gov); and, 3) provided to any member of the public requesting a copy of this Order.
8. If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.
9. This Order shall become effective at 12:01 am on February 16, 2022 and will continue to be in effect until it is extended, rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Health Officer. The Health Officer will continue to assess the public health situation as it evolves and may modify this Order, or issue additional Orders, related to COVID-19, as changing circumstances dictate.

IT IS SO ORDERED:



Celia Sutton-Pado, M.D.
Health Officer of the County of Sierra

Dated: February 10, 2022