



Press Release

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Washington County Mayor issues mask requirement

JONESBOROUGH – In response to a sharp rise in hospitalizations due to COVID-19, Washington County Mayor Joe Grandy is issuing a county-wide mandate.

The mandate states that masks must be worn by people in public places beginning at 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, July 14. Unless extended or repealed, Washington County will remain under this order until Aug. 3.

“After many hours of reflection and consultation with local health officials, I have decided to sign this order requiring face coverings where physical distancing is not possible,” Grandy said.

In a message to area mayors, Ballad Health stated that between July 6 and today the number of COVID-19 patients admitted to its hospitals has grown from 17 to 45 – nearly doubling each week. Currently, 12 COVID-19 positive patients are in the health system’s Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and of those, five are on ventilators.

“Numbers like those, along with the fact that we need to flatten the curve without reverting to our previous phases of closure, led us to this point with this requirement,” Grandy said. “We don’t want to pedal back with closures. We want our students to be able to return to schools and universities in the fall. We want to keep moving forward.”

Governor Bill Lee signed Executive Order 54 on July 3, granting county mayors in 89 counties the authority to issue local mask requirements in the event of a significant rise in COVID-19 cases.

On July 8, Mayor Grandy issued an order requiring masks be worn inside public areas of all government buildings in Washington County. The following day, Chief Justice Jeffrey S. Bivins issued a state-wide order requiring masks be worn in all courts and court clerks’ offices, except administrative courts within the Executive Branch, federal courts and federal court clerks’ offices in Tennessee.

Pursuant to the Governor’s order, the Mayor’s face covering mandate includes the following:

- A face covering over the nose and mouth shall be worn by employees and visitors inside businesses, organizations or venues in use by members of the public.
- Children age 12 and under are not required to wear a face covering.

- Persons who have trouble breathing due to an underlying health condition or those who have another bona fide medical or health-related reason are not required to wear a face covering.
- Face coverings are not required in situations in which wearing one poses a safety or security risk.

The new order is available on Washington County's web site (washingtoncountyttn.org) under COVID-19 Updates.