

LAKE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER 20-01

In order to ensure a coordinated, effective, and evidence-based response to COVID-19, the Lake County Health Department, as approved to the Lake County Board of Health, serving the citizens of all communities of Lake County¹ and in light of the current status of the pandemic within the country and our region, following the review of available literature, and given that there is no vaccine or medication available to prevent COVID-19, measures such as hand hygiene, physical distancing, and wearing face coverings are the most effective strategies to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets from infected persons to uninfected persons, thus reducing the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and the morbidity and mortality from COVID-19.

As the Lake County Health Department, pursuant to the authority granted by Indiana Codes 16-20-1 *et seq.* and 16-41-9 *et seq.*, in the interest of protecting those within the jurisdiction of the Lake County Health Department, and reducing the spread of communicable disease, specifically the novel Coronavirus (which causes COVID-19), the Lake County Health Department is issuing a Public Health Order, with support of the Lake County Board of Health. The following should take effect throughout Lake County, Indiana, beginning July 20th, 2020 until further recommendation from the Health Department.

Any business establishments open to customers should make alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol readily accessible at the entrance and in proximity to high-touch surfaces. A face covering over one's nose and mouth should be worn by any persons entering an enclosed public space or enclosed place of business, unless such persons have a medical exception indicating that a face covering is ill-advised for health reasons, or the face covering prevents the persons from delivering or receiving goods or services. The face covering should be worn at all times when physical distancing of at least six feet cannot be maintained.

All businesses and public accommodations that are open to the public must ensure that all customers and/or visitors are complying with the requirements of paragraph above. Businesses may ask customers not complying with the law to leave.

When engaged in outdoor exercise or activities including parties and private gatherings, individuals (other than members of the same household) should maintain a distance of at least six (6) feet from one another at all times and are not required to wear a mask except when in a group of 25 or more.

Exceptions include but are not limited to any person who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance. Examples of such exceptions include but are not limited to individuals with respiratory conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive lung disease; severe anxiety; autism; cerebral palsy; children under 2 years of age, etc.

Restaurants should follow the State of Indiana Guidelines as set forth at https://www.backontrack.in.gov/files/BackOnTrack-IN_IndustryGuidelines-Restaurants.pdf.

Children from kindergarten to twelfth grade should wear a mask if they are required to ride a bus to/from school. Upon arrival at school, masks should be on prior to all children entering the school and in the common areas of the school including hallways. Masks are also required within the classrooms as it has shown there is a significant benefit in decreasing the transmission of COVID-19 virus. However, we do understand that students need certain mask free time.

¹ It should be noted, the Lake County Health Department does not have jurisdiction over the cities of Gary and East Chicago as they have their own Health Departments and Directors pursuant to I.C. 16-19-3-21.

Given the diversity of the classrooms, instructors, and courses, individual school districts are best equipped to determining exceptions to mask use in cases where social distancing can be maintained: recess, lunch, quiet study time, exam time etc. Community members as a whole and families are strongly encouraged to continue to wear masks as well as maintaining social distancing to show the children the importance of doing the same in classrooms as well as to keep the rates of community transmission low.

For further guidance, schools within the jurisdiction of the Lake County Board of Health Department should look to the guidance provided by State of Indiana Department of Education guidelines [here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T1nQj3BrQRtT5QXVcVLGeI14bOd5dSCIWRggPuPE5dg/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T1nQj3BrQRtT5QXVcVLGeI14bOd5dSCIWRggPuPE5dg/edit).

These Recommendations and Guidelines are hereby issued on the 20th of July, 2020, pursuant to the Indiana Code provisions listed above and in a manner consistent with all statutory authority delegated to me as the Director of the Lake County Health Department. I will continue to monitor the health of Lake County residents and will issue additional orders or recommendations as necessary.

SO ORDERED.



Dr. Chandana Vavilala
Health Officer
Lake County Health Department