

**Cape May County  
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Board of Chosen Freeholders  
Public Information**

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**NEWS**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Today's Date:** July 1, 2020

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**County Freeholders, Mayors, and Chamber Issue Urgent Request for Universal Mask-Wearing Throughout Cape May County**

CAPE MAY COUNTY, NJ – The Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Cape May County Chamber Board of Directors, and the Mayors of all sixteen Cape May County municipalities released this joint statement today as follows:

**We join together to urgently request that all residents of and visitors to Cape May County wear face coverings in all public places, other than certain very limited exceptions. Thanks to the good sense, hard work, and sacrifices of members of our community, COVID-19 cases in Cape May County have remained below a critical threshold, however, we must take bold steps to ensure that cases continue to trend downward or, at minimum, remain steady even with the influx of seasonal residents and visitors expected during July and August. For the health of all and as an investment in the economic health of our community, we deeply appreciate and now depend upon the cooperation of business owners, staff members, and the public in this needed next step.**

States and regions ahead of New Jersey in the business reopening process are experiencing surges of the coronavirus that are, in certain instances, exceeding the capacity of medical infrastructure. This has caused both pauses in business openings and the reclosing of businesses. As a result, community leaders are focusing attention on and stepping up efforts to promote protocols such as mask-wearing in order to avoid similar outcomes.

“Cape May County is a safe place to live, work, and visit, and we must step up aggressively to meet the COVID threat in order to keep it that way,” stated Will Morey, Cape May County Freeholder and Co-Chair of the County’s Recovery Task Force. “We’re in a position right now to contain the mild outbreak of COVID that our County is experiencing. Engaging this clear and present threat will serve to protect public health and, for businesses, may literally save the summer,” Morey added.

An established and growing body of scientific studies support mask-wearing as an effective mitigation in the spread of COVID-19, and a consensus had rapidly developed on this matter in the wider medical community. States that have instituted a mask mandate have demonstrably slowed their COVID growth rate.

For specifics on face coverings that are in compliance with this request, please see the [relevant CDC guidance](#).

The following are exceptions, where the mask-wearing request does not apply:

- For those engaged in active outdoor recreation such as swimming, walking, hiking, bicycling, or running.
- While on the beach, so long as strict social distancing is maintained.
- When socially distanced and eating or drinking in public at a restaurant, bar, or other food or beverage establishment.
- By those who cannot medically tolerate wearing a face covering.
- By children aged 9 or younger.

Please note that the request for the wearing of face coverings INCLUDES the County's Boardwalks.

“Wherever you are, we welcome you to come here and enjoy your summer in a responsible way,” said Freeholder Len Desiderio, who is the Mayor of Sea Isle City and Co-Chair of the County’s Recovery Task Force. “We’ve had good participation with directives so far, and this urgent mask-wearing request is an important way for us to be proactive and make sure our visitors will not make COVID a summer memory,” he added.

While united in issuing this urgent request for the wearing of face coverings, the group also recognizes the absolute necessity of observing adherence to capacity limitations imposed by State Executive Order, particularly for bars and restaurants. All efforts will be made to encourage and compel owners, staff, and the public to operate and congregate within those limits.

“Businesses are really the front line of actively encouraging folks to follow protocols, wear masks and social distance,” commented Vicki Clark, President of the Cape May County Chamber. “This urgent request will help businesses protect their employees and customers, as well as their own economic vitality throughout the summer season,” added Clark.

The County will continue to monitor health data and observations of activity in the area and update the public on mitigation measures as needed. To assist with positively and proactively requesting mask use, free graphics and marketing materials are available for public download at [www.safelytogethercmc.com](http://www.safelytogethercmc.com).

