



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PO Box 47890 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7890

Tel: 360-236-4030 • 711 Washington Relay Service

**ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH
AMENDING ORDER 20-03**

20-03.11

**Face Coverings – Statewide
Termination of Order**

WHEREAS, due to the progression of COVID-19 in Washington State and evidence showing that wearing a mask or face covering reduces an infected person’s chance of spreading the infection to others and may protect uninfected persons from infected people around them, I issued orders requiring individuals to wear face coverings in certain settings, amended as the circumstances of the pandemic changed; and

WHEREAS, according to the CDC, with current high levels of vaccination and high levels of population immunity from both vaccination and infections, the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 is greatly reduced for most people; and

WHEREAS, as COVID-19 death and hospitalization rates were significantly lower during the 2022-2023 respiratory virus season compared to the prior two seasons (2021-2022 and 2020-2021), likely in part due to high levels of populations immunity acquired through vaccinations and prior infections as well as the wider availability of treatments for those at risk for severe COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the CDC recommends that people wear a high-quality mask or respirator indoors in public when communities are at a high COVID-19 community level, as indicated by CDC data, and that at a medium level, people who are immunocompromised or at increased risk for severe disease should wear a high-quality mask or respirator indoors in public, and that at low levels, individual decisions to wear a mask should be informed by individual risk; and

WHEREAS, DOH likewise continues to [recommend wearing well-fitted masks or respirators](#) to protect health and prevent the spread of COVID-19; and

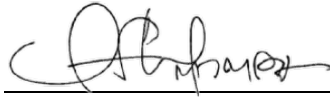
WHEREAS, the CDC and DOH will continue to monitor the burden and trajectory of COVID-19 and the science to issue infection prevention guidance for the public, healthcare, and other higher risk congregant settings, including recommendations for the use of masks and other measures, to limit the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases; and

WHEREAS, other public agencies, local or tribal health officials, health care facilities, businesses, or providers, and school districts may independently choose to require masks in their facilities; and

WHEREAS, based on current data and guidance, it is appropriate for me to rescind and terminate the statewide face covering order currently in effect.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Washington State Secretary of Health, as a result of the above-noted situation, and under RCW 43.70.130, RCW 70.05.070, WAC 246-100-036, and any other applicable authority, do hereby rescind and terminate Order 20-03 (Face Coverings - Statewide), et seq., effective April 2, 2023, at 11:59 PM.

Signed this 31st day of March, 2023.



Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH
Secretary of Health