



# NEW HANOVER COUNTY

## COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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### Administrative Memorandum

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<b>Approved By:</b>	Chris Coudriet, County Manager

### Face Coverings on New Hanover County Property Policy

#### I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has created a framework for when it is recommended that individuals wear face coverings in public indoor settings and to help communities decide what other prevention steps to take. This framework is based on a combination of three metrics in the community: new COVID-19 hospital admissions, local hospital capacity, and new COVID-19 cases. Community levels are categorized into low, medium, or high impact– with the high impact level recommending face coverings for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status in indoor settings. Given this information, the county's face coverings policy will reflect what is recommended by the CDC, based on the current COVID-19 community level framework of low, medium, or high impact. For more information about the CDC's framework, visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

#### II. DEFINITIONS

##### Face Coverings:

There are three types of Face Coverings that are recommended and listed in order of most protective:

- A. NIOSH-approved disposable particulate respirators such as a well-fitting N-95 mask or KN-95 mask.
- B. Disposable procedure masks or surgical masks.
- C. Cloth masks with multiple layers of tightly woven, breathable fabric, and a nose wire.

All face coverings should have a proper fit over the nose, mouth and chin without gaps.

### III. POLICY

- A. **Low Community Level:** When the CDC determines New Hanover County is at a Low Community Level, it is recommended that employees stay up to date with their vaccines and get tested if they have symptoms, but face coverings are not advised at this level.
- B. **Medium Community Level:** When the CDC determines New Hanover County is at a Medium Community Level, employees who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease should consult their healthcare provider about whether a face covering should be worn and continue to take additional precautions like getting tested and ensuring vaccinations are up to date.
- C. **High Community Level:** When the CDC determines New Hanover County is at a High Community Level, all employees regardless of vaccination status will be strongly encouraged to wear face coverings when indoors in public places, and continue with the same protective measures as in other community levels. Employees will not be required to wear face coverings if the community is impacted at this level initially, however the county reserves the right to implement a face covering requirement if community metrics and transmission risks warrant it.
- D. If an employee has COVID-19 related symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19, they should wear a face covering in accordance with CDC guidance, regardless of the community level.

### IV. ORGANIZATIONS/INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED

This administrative memorandum applies to all New Hanover County employees.

### V. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

During each level of community impact, employees should continue to take appropriate protective measures as outlined by the CDC and within this policy. If the county is deemed to have a “High” COVID-19 Community Level by the CDC, New Hanover County employees will be strongly encouraged to wear face coverings that securely cover the nose and mouth while indoors at all New Hanover County facilities, in a county vehicle, and while on official county business. This will initially be a recommendation, but it could transition to a requirement depending on the community’s COVID metrics, the variant circulating most widely, and/or the potential impacts to the county’s continuity of operations

### VI. INTERNAL PROCESSES

All employees will be notified if CDC-outlined community levels in New Hanover County change to “high” and face coverings are recommended. If additional protective measures are warranted, those will be communicated with all employees and with department heads to help enforce.

## **VII. POLICY EVALUATION**

The policy will be evaluated in the context of the spread of communicable diseases in our community and in compliance with CDC guidance, and federal, state, and local orders.