



Office of the Governor

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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October 15, 2021

## **State to extend indoor mask requirement**

SANTA FE – The statewide requirement that face masks be worn in all indoor public spaces, with only limited exceptions and regardless of vaccination status, will be extended, the Office of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced Friday.

The state Department of Health re-implemented the mask requirement in August in an effort to stem the state’s rising tide of COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations.

Staffed hospital beds remain in dangerously short supply, as primarily unvaccinated individuals continue to spread a more infectious variant of the virus, and hospitals are on the brink of implementing crisis standards of care.

“Many of us just assume that if we develop a serious illness, there will be an ICU bed available for us,” said **Dr. Scrase**. “That has not been the case for every New Mexican over the past six weeks. It is not time to abandon basic precautions. Our hospital and health care partners remain incredibly, incredibly concerned about the serious illnesses they are dealing with, and the pressure placed upon their institutions and personnel by these continuing infections.

“Tight-fitting masks make a difference. Wearing one protects you and your family.”

Health officials, including at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, continue to recommend tight-fitting face masks be worn in indoor spaces as they are effective in limiting the spread of the more transmissible Delta variant.

The state reported 20 new COVID-19 fatalities on Thursday, Oct. 14. There were 879 total new cases reported on October 14, and to date, more than 4,900 New Mexicans have been killed by the virus.

The extended mask requirement is now effective through at least November 12. The governor, acting upon the counsel and analysis of the state Medical Advisory Team and state health officials, may decide to extend or lift the mask requirement as necessary.

The separate public health order requiring health care workers to be vaccinated and vaccinate-or-test requirements for school workers remains in place.

The operative emergency public health order, issued by Acting Health Secretary David R. Scrase, M.D., is attached to this news release.

Vaccination continues to be the most effective tool against COVID-19. Get vaccinated to protect yourself, your family, and your coworkers. Visit [VaccineNM.org](https://www.vaccinenm.org) to find locations and to sign up for an appointment **today**.

New Mexicans can learn more about whether they are eligible for a **COVID-19 booster shot** at [vaccinenm.org/boosters](https://www.vaccinenm.org/boosters). Eligible New Mexicans may also schedule their booster shots at that site.

The Department of Health also advises all New Mexicans aged 6 months and older to **get a flu shot**; many providers of the COVID-19 vaccine also provide a flu shot. The department recommends getting the shot by the end of October for best protection.

*FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [CV.NMHEALTH.ORG](https://www.cv.nmhealth.org).*

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MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM  
Governor

DAVID R. SCRASE, M.D.  
Acting Cabinet Secretary

**PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER  
NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
ACTING SECRETARY DAVID R. SCRASE, M.D.**

**October 15, 2021**

**Public Health Emergency Order Clarifying that Current Guidance Documents, Advisories, and Emergency Public Health Orders Remain in Effect; and Amending Prior Public Health Emergency Orders to Impose Certain Public Health Measures**

**PREFACE**

The purpose of this amended Public Health Emergency Order is to amend restrictions on mass gatherings and business operations, which were implemented in response to the spread of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”). While vaccines are the most effective method to prevent the spread of COVID-19, masks, social distancing, and self-isolation measures continue to be necessary to protect New Mexicans who are ineligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or who choose not to receive a vaccine. All New Mexicans should continue to adhere to social distancing protocols when required to protect our State as a whole. In accordance with these purposes, this Order and its exceptions should be narrowly construed to encourage New Mexicans continue social distancing measures.

It is hereby **ORDERED** that:

1. All current guidance documents and advisories issued by the Department of Health remain in effect.
2. The following Public Health Emergency Orders remain in effect through the current Public Health Emergency and any subsequent renewals of that Public Health Emergency or until they are amended or rescinded:
  - A. December 15, 2020, Amended Public Health Emergency Order Implementing Additional Contact Tracing Information Requirements for All Laboratories and Submitters Submitting Notifiable Condition COVID-19 Test Results to the New Mexico Epidemiology and Response Division;
  - B. January 8, 2021, Emergency Order Implementing Administration and Reporting Requirements for All COVID-19 Vaccine Providers;
  - C. April 5, 2021, Amended Public Health Emergency Order Temporarily Limiting Long-Term Care Facilities Visitation Due to COVID-19;

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- D. February 26, 2021, Public Health Emergency Order Implementing Administration Requirements for All COVID-19 Vaccine Providers and Requiring Accurate Information be Provided by Individuals Registering to Receive the COVID-19 Vaccine; and
- E. September 15, 2021, Amended Public Health Emergency Order Requiring All School Workers Comply with Certain Health Requirements and Requiring Congregate Care Facility Workers, Hospital Workers, and Employees of the Office of the Governor Be Fully Vaccinated.

3. The September 15, 2021, Public Health Emergency Order Clarifying that Current Guidance Documents, Advisories, and Emergency Public Health Orders Remain in Effect; and Amending Prior Public Health Emergency Orders to Impose Certain Public Health Measures is hereby amended as follows:

### **ORDER**

**WHEREAS**, on March 11, 2020, because of the spread of the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”), Michelle Lujan Grisham, the Governor of the State of New Mexico, declared that a Public Health Emergency exists in New Mexico under the Public Health Emergency Response Act, and invoked her authority under the All Hazards Emergency Management Act;

**WHEREAS**, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has renewed the declaration of a Public Health Emergency through November 12, 2021;

**WHEREAS**, confirmed cases in the United States have risen to more than 44 million and confirmed COVID-19 infections in New Mexico have risen to over 262,000;

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is a deadly virus and has taken the lives of over 700,000 Americans and over 4,900 New Mexicans;

**WHEREAS**, the further spread of COVID-19 in the State of New Mexico poses a threat to the health, safety, wellbeing and property of the residents in the State due to, among other things, illness from COVID-19, illness-related absenteeism from employment (particularly among public safety and law enforcement personnel and persons engaged in activities and businesses critical to the economy and infrastructure of the State), potential displacement of persons, and closures of schools or other places of public gathering;

**WHEREAS**, vaccination, social distancing, and the consistent and proper use of face coverings in public spaces are the most effective ways New Mexicans can minimize the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the potentially devastating impact of this pandemic in New Mexico; and

**WHEREAS**, the New Mexico Department of Health possesses legal authority pursuant to the Public Health Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 24-1-1 to -40, the Public Health Emergency Response Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 12-10A-1 to -19, the Department of Health Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 9-7-1 to -18, and inherent constitutional police powers of the New Mexico state government, to preserve and promote public health and safety, to adopt isolation and quarantine,

and to close public places and forbid gatherings of people when deemed necessary by the Department for the protection of public health.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, David R. Scrase, M.D., Acting Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State of New Mexico, and as directed by the Governor pursuant to the full scope of her emergency powers under the All Hazard Emergency Management Act, do hereby declare the current outbreak of COVID-19 a condition of public health importance, as defined in NMSA 1978, Section 24-1-2(A) as an infection, a disease, a syndrome, a symptom, an injury or other threat that is identifiable on an individual or community level and can reasonably be expected to lead to adverse health effects in the community, and that poses an imminent threat of substantial harm to the population of New Mexico.**

**I HEREBY DIRECT AS FOLLOWS:**

(1) Unless a healthcare provider instructs otherwise, all individuals ages 2 years and older shall wear a mask or multilayer cloth face covering in all indoor public settings except when eating or drinking. Nothing in this Order shall be construed as prohibiting any business, house of worship, non-profit entity, or other entity from imposing more stringent requirements.

(2) Any business, establishment, or non-profit (other than those which are a healthcare operation, utility, or indigent care services) which members of the public regularly visit must report to the New Mexico Environment Department when there is an occurrence of a rapid response. The New Mexico Environment Department shall monitor when an entity has four (4) or more rapid responses within a fourteen (14) day period. For purposes of this directive, rapid responses will be counted on a rolling basis. Businesses, establishments, or non-profits with four or more rapid responses shall not be required to cease operations. However, the rapid responses must be reported to the Environment Department so that the public may be made aware of the positive cases.

(3) All businesses, establishments, and non-profit entities must adhere to the pertinent COVID-Safe Practices.

(4) Private educational institutions serving children and young adults from pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade, including homeschools serving children who are not household members, shall adhere to the face covering and other COVID-Safe Practices requirements for in-person instruction contained in the New Mexico's Public Education Department's "Reentry Guidance" and "COVID-19 Response Toolkit for New Mexico's Public Schools," available at <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/reentry-district-and-school-guidance/>, and may operate up to maximum capacity. Private educational institutions shall follow the reporting, testing, and closure requirements set forth by the Public Education Department in the Reentry Guidance and COVID-19 Response Toolkit for New Mexico's Public Elementary Schools.

**I FURTHER DIRECT** as follows:

(1) This Order shall be broadly disseminated in English, Spanish, and other appropriate languages to the citizens of the State of New Mexico.

(2) This Order declaring restrictions based upon the existence of a condition of public health importance shall not abrogate any disease-reporting requirements set forth in the Public Health Act.


(3) Nothing in this Order is intended to restrain or preempt local authorities or state agencies from enacting more stringent restrictions than those required by the Order.

(4) This Order shall take effect immediately and remain in effect through November 12, 2021.

(5) The New Mexico Department of Health, the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and all other State departments and agencies are authorized to take all appropriate steps to ensure compliance with this Order.

(6) Any and all State officials authorized by the Department of Health may enforce this Order by issuing a citation of violation, which may result in civil administrative penalties of up to \$5,000 for each violation under NMSA 1978, Section 12-10A-19.

ATTEST:

  
MAGGIE TOULOUSE OLIVER  
SECRETARY OF STATE

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
THIS 15TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2021

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT  
SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO



DAVID R. SCRASE, M.D.  
ACTING SECRETARY OF THE  
NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

