

Texas governor orders most residents to wear a face covering in public

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(CNN)Texas Gov. Greg Abbott on Thursday ordered residents of counties with 20 or more active Covid-19 cases to wear a mask in public, according to his office.

"We have the ability to keep businesses open and move our economy forward so that Texans can continue to earn a paycheck, but it requires each of us to do our part to protect one another -- and that means wearing a face covering in public spaces," Abbott said in a statement.

The order takes effect Friday at 12:01 p.m. CT.

About 95% of Texans live in counties where there are 20 or more active cases.

The latest mask guidance

There are exceptions to the order, including Texans younger than 10 and people who have a medical condition that prevents wearing a mask.

The order also exempts "any person who is actively providing or obtaining access to religious worship, but wearing a face covering is strongly encouraged."

Violators might be given a verbal or written warning, and in subsequent cases be fined up to \$250.

The directive comes as Texas, like other states, sees a jump in cases. Texas on Thursday reported 7,915 new Covid-19 cases.

There have been more than 175,000 cases reported in the state -- the second most populous in the US -- since the pandemic began.