

**AN ORDINANCE TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS, SARS-CoV-2, AND THE DISEASE IT CAUSES, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS COVID-19 BY REQUIRING FACE COVERINGS IN CERTAIN INDOOR AND OUTDOOR LOCATIONS.**

**WHEREAS**, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, and the disease it causes, commonly referred to as COVID-19, a pandemic (for reference in this ordinance, this virus and the disease that it causes are referred to as “COVID-19”); and

**WHEREAS**, on March 12, 2020, Governor Ralph S. Northam issued Executive Order Number Fifty-One (“EO 51”) declaring a state of emergency for the Commonwealth of Virginia because of the COVID-19 pandemic; EO 51 acknowledged the existence of a public health emergency arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and that it constitutes a “disaster” as defined by Virginia Code § 44-146.16 because of the public health threat presented by a communicable disease anticipated to spread; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 14, 2020, effective at 5:00 p.m. and extending through June 10, 2020, at 5:00 p.m., or as may be amended by the City Council, the City Manager, in his capacity as Director of Emergency Management, issued a Declaration of Local Emergency applicable throughout the entire City of Alexandria, Virginia, pursuant to authority granted pursuant to City Code Section 4-3-5, Virginia Code Sections 44-146.21 and 15.2-1413, which City Declaration was unanimously consented to the by the City Council on March 14, 2020, pursuant to City Resolution No. 2928, as required by applicable law; on June 9, 2020, the City Manager extended such Declaration of Local Emergency through September 30, 2020 which extension was unanimously consented to by the City Council on June 9, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 spreads from person to person and, at this time, it appears that COVID19 is spread primarily through viral respiratory droplets, which are expelled when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, sings, or engages in physical activity; and confined spaces when people are in close contact with one another (within about six feet) increase the ability of individuals to breathe in these respiratory droplets, contract COVID-19, and is more likely to spread COVID-19 within the community; (See *Xponential Fitness v. Arizona*, No CV-20-01310-PHX-DJH, 2020 WL 3971908 at \*1); [World Health Organization Scientific Brief, July 9, 2020](#)) and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is extremely easy to transmit, can be transmitted by infected people who show no symptoms, and the population has not developed herd immunity (See *Xponential Fitness v. Arizona*, No CV-20-01310-PHX-DJH, 2020 WL 3971908 at \*1) ; and

**WHEREAS**, at this time, there is no known cure, no effective treatment, no vaccine; and because people may be infected but asymptomatic, they may unwittingly infect others ( See *South Bay United Pentecostal Church v Newsom*, 140 S. Ct. 1613 (May 29, 2020) (Roberts concurring in denial of application for injunctive relief); on the fact that there is no effective treatment as of the date of this ordinance, see also [WHO Report: Coronavirus disease \(COVID-](#)

1 [19\) advice for the public: MythBusters, Mayo Clinic: Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#));  
2 and

3  
4 **WHEREAS**, the World Health Organization, the United States Centers for Disease  
5 Control and Prevention (“Centers for Disease Control”) and the Virginia Department of Health  
6 have identified several behaviors and practices that are fundamental in controlling the spread of  
7 COVID-19 in the community: frequently washing hands, sanitizing frequently touched surfaces,  
8 wearing a cloth face covering when in public, maintaining a separation of at least six feet  
9 between people who do not regularly live together, limiting the size of gatherings in public  
10 places, and limiting the duration of gatherings; (See [CDC Considerations for Events and](#)  
11 [Gatherings July 2020](#), [CDC Consideration for Restaurants and Bars July 17, 2020](#), and [Virginia](#)  
12 [Department of Health COVID 19 Resources](#)); and

13 **WHEREAS**, with respect to people wearing face coverings when in public, current  
14 evidence suggests that transmission of COVID-19 occurs primarily between people through  
15 direct, indirect, or close contact with infected people through infected secretions such as saliva  
16 and respiratory secretions, or through their respiratory droplets, which are expelled when an  
17 infected person coughs, sneezes, talks or sings; and some outbreak reports related to indoor  
18 crowded spaces have suggested the possibility of aerosol transmission, combined with droplet  
19 transmission, for example, during choir practice, in food establishments, or in fitness classes;  
20 (See [World Health Organization Scientific Brief, July 9, 2020](#)); and

21 **WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control states that cloth face coverings are strongly  
22 encouraged in settings where persons might raise their voice (e.g., shouting, chanting, singing)  
23 (See [CDC Report Considerations for Events and Gatherings July 7, 2020](#)); and

24 **WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control advises, in restaurants: (i) wearing cloth  
25 face coverings when less than six feet apart from other people or indoors; (ii) wearing face  
26 coverings as much as possible when not eating; (iii) maintaining a proper social distancing  
27 between persons who do not regularly live together; and (iv) sitting outside when possible (See  
28 [CDC Personal and Social Activities Website dated July 30, 2020](#)); and

29 **WHEREAS**, for these and related reasons, the Virginia Department of Health has stated  
30 that those businesses that operate indoors and at higher capacity, where physical distancing  
31 “recommendations” are not observed, sharing objects is permitted, and persons are not wearing  
32 cloth face coverings, create higher risk for the transmission of COVID-19 (See [VHD Website](#));  
33 and

34 **WHEREAS**, since Governor Northam issued EO 51 on March 13, 2020, he has issued  
35 several more Executive Orders jointly with Orders of Public Health Emergency issued by M.  
36 Norman Oliver, MD, MA, State Health Commissioner, pertaining to COVID-19; as of the date  
37 of adoption of this ordinance, “Executive Order Number Sixty-Seven (2020) and Order of Public  
38 Health Emergency Seven, Phase Three Easing of Certain Temporary Restrictions Due to Novel  
39 Coronavirus (COVID-19)” (collectively referred to as “EO 67”), which became effective at  
40 12:00 a.m. on July 1, 2020, is in effect; and

1           **WHEREAS**, the City of Alexandria is an urban jurisdiction situated in the metropolitan  
2 Washington, DC region with a compact downtown area that attracts visitors from around the  
3 region, and across the country and world, and includes workers who live outside the City and  
4 residents who regularly visit other jurisdictions, making it particularly susceptible to the spread  
5 of COVID-19.

6           **NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:**

7           **Sec. 1. Purpose**

8           For the reasons stated in the recitals, the purpose of this ordinance is to prevent the spread of  
9 COVID-19.

10          **Sec. 2. Authority**

11          This ordinance is authorized by [Charter Section 2.04\(h\)](#) “to make and enforce all regulations  
12 necessary to preserve and promote public health and sanitation and protect the inhabitants of the  
13 city from contagious, infectious or other diseases.” [Section 15.2-1102](#) of the State Code  
14 generally and [Section 2.01](#) of the City Charter grants the authority for a City to exercise all  
15 powers, not expressly prohibited by the state code or the constitution, that are necessary “to  
16 promote the general welfare of the city and the safety, health, peace, good order, comfort,  
17 convenience and morals of its inhabitants.”

18          **Sec. 3. Definitions**

19          The following definitions apply to this ordinance:

- 20           A. “Face covering” means an item normally made of cloth or various other materials, often  
21 with elastic bands or cloth ties, that is secured over the wearer’s nose and mouth in an  
22 effort to contain or reduce the spread of potentially infectious respiratory secretions at the  
23 source (i.e., the person’s nose and mouth).  
24
- 25           B. “Physical Distancing” means maintaining the physical distance of separation, which may  
26 change depending on the activity an individual is engaged in, as required by any  
27 applicable Executive Order of the Governor or Order of Public Health Emergency of the  
28 State Health Commissioner. In the event there is no other applicable requirement,  
29 “physical distancing” means maintaining at least six feet of distance between persons  
30 who do not regularly live together.  
31
- 32           C. “Public place” means any place  
33           1. That is:  
34           i. indoors, other than a person’s residence or personal vehicle, or  
35           ii. outdoors where physical distancing between persons not living in the same  
36 household cannot be maintained, and  
37           2. generally open to the public including, but not limited to, public parks and open  
38 spaces, sidewalks, trails, retail stores, food establishments, theaters, personal care  
39 and personal grooming services, common areas of condo or apartment buildings,  
40 and transportation other than a personal vehicle.

1 **Sec. 4. Face Coverings**

2 A. *Face coverings required.* Face coverings must be worn by all persons in public places except  
3 as provided in Sections 4(B).

4 B. *Exemptions.* The requirements of this ordinance do not apply to the following persons:

5 1. *Children and Students.*

- 6 i. Children 10 years of age and under; provided, that children under 10 years  
7 of age may be required to wear face coverings if a plan submitted to the  
8 Commonwealth for a school or other facility where children congregate so  
9 requires;
- 10 ii. students in daycare centers or participating in-person classes in K-12  
11 education or institutions of higher education shall be governed by the  
12 plans submitted to the Commonwealth for such institutions, if one exists,  
13 and not by this ordinance.

14 2. *Medical Condition or Disability.* Persons for whom:

- 15 i. wearing a face covering poses a substantial mental or physical health risk,  
16 such as persons who have trouble breathing while wearing a face covering  
17 or are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face  
18 covering without assistance;
- 19 ii. persons with a health condition preventing the use of a face covering;
- 20 iii. persons with a disability preventing the use of a face covering, or
- 21 iv. persons seeking to communicate with the hearing impaired and for which  
22 the mouth needs to be visible.

23 Any person who declines to wear a face covering pursuant to this exception shall not be  
24 required to produce or carry medical documentation verifying the stated condition nor  
25 shall the person be required to identify the precise underlying medical condition.

26 3. *Physical Activity.* While persons are swimming or engaged in other physical activity  
27 where wearing a face covering has been determined to pose a health risk. Additionally,  
28 any outdoor activity considered “Recreational Sports” under the Governor’s Executive  
29 Order 67 shall be governed by that Executive Order as the same may be amended, and  
30 not by this ordinance.

31 4. *Eating or drinking.* While a person is actively eating food or drinking a beverage.  
32 Face coverings are still required to be worn while waiting to receive food or beverages, or  
33 during substantial breaks between periods of eating and drinking.

34 5. *Work Conditions.* If wearing a face covering would subject the person to an unsafe  
35 work condition, as determined by federal, state, or local occupational safety regulators or  
36 workplace safety guidelines.

37 6. *Government or medical services.* When temporary removal of the face covering is  
38 necessary to secure government or medical (including dental) services.



- 1 Second Reading: September 12, 2020
- 2 Final Passage: September 12, 2020