

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF OCONEE
ORDINANCE 2020-14(E)**

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE REQUIRING INDIVIDUALS TO WEAR FACE COVERINGS IN CERTAIN FACILITIES OWNED OR OPERATED BY OCONEE COUNTY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

WHEREAS, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (“COVID-19”) is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus previously unidentified in humans and which can spread from person to person;

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the “CDC”) has warned of the high public health threat posed by COVID-19 globally and in the United States;

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Secretary declared a public health emergency in the United States for COVID-19 under Section 391 of the Public Health Service Act;

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency, which began on March 1, 2020;

WHEREAS, also on March 13, 2020, the Governor of the State of South Carolina (the “State”) issued Executive Order 2020-08, declaring a State of Emergency based on a determination that COVID-19 poses an actual or imminent public health emergency for the State;

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State has declared a continued State of Emergency by way of subsequent Executive Orders;

WHEREAS, the State continues to experience a significant number of identified new COVID-19 cases daily;

WHEREAS, health authorities, including the CDC, the Surgeon General of the United States, and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control have recommended the use of face coverings as a means of preventing the spread of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, S.C. Code § 4-9-130 provides that “[t]o meet public emergencies affecting life, health, safety or the property of the people, council may adopt emergency ordinances; but such ordinances shall not levy taxes, grant, renew or extend a franchise or impose or change a service rate. Every emergency ordinance shall be designated as such and shall contain a declaration that an emergency exists and describe the emergency. Every emergency ordinance shall be enacted by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of council present. An emergency ordinance is effective immediately upon its enactment without regard to any reading, public hearing, publication requirements, or public notice requirements. Emergency ordinances shall

expire automatically as of the sixty-first day following the date of enactment.”;

WHEREAS, the Oconee County Council has determined that it would serve the public interest and be within the County’s police powers under Home Rule and S.C. Code § 4-9-25 to require that individuals wear face coverings in certain County-owned or operated facilities (“County Facilities,” defined below); and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance has been approved by at least two-thirds of the Councilmembers present at the meeting in which it was considered.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Oconee County Council as follows:

Section 1. Definitions. As used herein, the terms below shall have the following meanings:

- 1) “County Facility” means any building, structure, or real property owned, leased, rented, operated, or occupied by the County or one of its departments, offices, or agencies, and which is open to the public in general and which is being used for a public purpose. County-owned or operated facilities, the use of which is governed by other authorities, such as courthouses, or which are leased to and used by third parties, are not considered County Facilities for purposes of this Ordinance.
- 2) “Face Covering” means a uniform piece of cloth, fabric, or other material that securely covers a person’s nose and mouth and remains affixed in place without the use of one’s hands. Face Coverings include, but are not limited to, bandanas, medical masks, cloth masks, scarves, and gaiters, provided that they are worn such that they securely cover the person’s nose and mouth.

Section 2. Use of Face Coverings within County.

- 1) All employees, customers, vendors, guests, and other visitors are required to wear Face Coverings while inside the enclosed area of any County Facility; and
- 2) All persons positioned outside, but in close proximity to, County Facilities are required to wear Face Coverings when maintaining a distance of less than six (6) feet between other persons.

Section 3. Exemptions. Face Coverings shall not be required:

- 1) For those who cannot wear a Face Covering due to a medical or behavioral condition;
- 2) For those whose religious beliefs prevent them from wearing a Face Covering;
- 3) For children eleven years of age and under, provided that adults accompanying children age two to eleven shall use reasonable efforts to cause those children to wear Face Coverings while inside the enclosed area of a County Facility;
- 4) For County employees in those situations where they are not required to wear a Face Covering pursuant to written County policy;
- 5) When complying with directions of law enforcement officers or other first responders; and
- 6) For law enforcement officers, fire fighters, EMS, or other first responders while engaged in a public safety matter where it is not practical to wear a Face Covering.

Section 4. Violations: Civil Infraction. Any person violating the provisions of this Ordinance by failing to wear a Face Covering when required shall be guilty of a civil infraction, punishable by a penalty of not less than \$25.00 and not more than \$100.00.

Section 5. Suspension of Contrary Local Provisions. During the term of this Ordinance, any other ordinance, resolution, policy, or bylaw of the County that conflicts with the provisions hereof shall be and is hereby suspended and superseded.

Section 6. Severability. Should any provision, section, paragraph, sentence, or word of this Ordinance be rendered or declared invalid by any final court action in a court of competent jurisdiction or by reason of any preemptive legislation, the remaining provisions, sections, paragraphs, sentences, or words of this Ordinance as hereby adopted shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 7. Effective Date; Expiration. The provisions hereof shall be effective upon a single hearing and two-thirds vote of the Oconee County Council, and shall expire on the sixty-first day following the date of enactment.

DONE AND ENACTED AS AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE and approved at a meeting duly assembled by no less than an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Oconee County Council present, this 18th day of August, 2020.

OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

By: 
Julian Davis, III
Chairman of County Council

ATTEST:
By: 
Katie Smith
Clerk to County Council

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