



Press Release - 314/04/2020

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State government makes masks mandatory

Ruling on mandatory covering of mouth and nose applies as of 27 April on public transport and in shops and doctors' surgeries

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State government announcement:

As of Monday, 27 April 2020 it is mandatory in North Rhine-Westphalia for everyone to cover their mouth and nose when using public transport, shopping in retail stores or attending doctors' surgeries. The aim is to further reduce the risk of infection in central areas of public life where it is difficult or even impossible to implement the rule of keeping 1.5 metres apart.

The accordingly amended Coronavirus Protection Order now underlines the previously already applicable recommendation in a separate clause and simultaneously sets out there a corresponding legal requirement for the areas of public transport, retail and doctors' surgeries. In these areas it now becomes mandatory to wear a textile mouth and nose covering, such as so-called 'everyday masks' or 'community masks', or a scarf or shawl.

Health Minister Karl-Josef Laumann: "The new Order governs details of the so-called mandatory mouth covering rule that had previously not been defined. The most important things to do are still to keep your distance and rigorously adhere to hygiene rules. In certain situations wearing everyday masks can also contribute to reducing the risk of infection. I call on everybody to please adhere to this rule! The rules we have had in place so far are showing initial signs of success. Our health system is well-positioned and has so far not been pushed to its limits. It remains incumbent on every one of us to play their part."

The basic principle here is: when out in public keep a minimum distance of 1.5 metres from everyone else. The known exceptions continue to apply, e.g. direct relatives, siblings and people living together. If for any

specific reasons it is not possible to adhere to this, then wearing a mouth and nose covering is recommended.

For employees and customers in certain areas a mouth and nose covering is mandatory. This applies

- in all permitted sales outlets and shops (e.g. food stores, chemists, filling stations, banks and post offices), at weekly markets, when collecting food and/or drinks from restaurants etc. and in all public areas of shopping centres, malls and factory outlets,
- in all sales and show rooms of the manual trades and of service providers and when doing manual or service provision work, or having such work done, where this takes place without keeping a safe distance of 1.5 metres from the customer. Excluded from this are people, who drive a vehicle in the course of providing a service,
- in doctors' surgeries and similar health service facilities,
- when using public transport services and their facilities. This includes school buses, bus stops and underground stations.

The mandatory covering of mouth and nose applies to everyone in North Rhine-Westphalia. Exceptions apply for children below school age and people who for medical reasons cannot wear a mouth and nose covering. For employees the mandatory wearing of masks can be replaced by equally effective protective measures such as separation by glass, Plexiglas or similar.

Adherence to the rules within their business premises must be ensured by the business owners, just as for the previous rules on minimum distances, limited numbers of people, etc.

The amended Coronavirus Protection Order applies for the period 27 April until initially 3 May 2020. The Order can be accessed here:

https://www.land.nrw/sites/default/files/asset/document/stk_verordnung_24.04.2020.pdf

This press release is also available online on the state government website www.land.nrw

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