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City of Claremore Approves Citywide Mask, Social Distancing Ordinance to Reduce Spread of COVID-19

CLAREMORE, Okla. -- The Claremore City Council approved tonight a citywide mask and social distancing ordinance to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The ordinance will take effect on December 20, 2020 and requires individuals 10 years and older to wear a mask in public places. It also requires people to maintain six feet of distance between persons who are not part of the same household while in public places.

“Wearing a mask protects people and is the best way to keep businesses open and support our local economy,” said Bill Flanagan, Claremore mayor. “By wearing a mask, watching your distance and washing your hands, we can save lives and reduce the spread of the virus.”

The ordinance cited the recent spike in COVID-19 cases, including 27,807 active cases in Oklahoma and 420 active cases in Claremore as of Nov. 15, 2020. While a resolution recommending the use of masks was passed in July, according to data compiled by the Oklahoma State Department of Health for the period of July 31 - Nov. 15, 2020, the City of Claremore has experienced 324.30 percent increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases and a 204.35 percent increase in the number of active COVID-19 cases.

The new ordinance requires a mask to be properly worn (covering the nose and mouth) in public places such as grocery stores, retail stores, public service areas, places of public accommodation and schools. The social distancing requirement states individuals must maintain 6 feet of distance between persons who are not part of the same household while in public places. It will remain in effect until Feb. 28, 2021, or until it is repealed, modified or extended by the City Council through a subsequent ordinance.

“The City Council took this important action to assist in protecting Claremore citizens and businesses based on data showing that the use of face coverings reduces the spread of COVID-19 when they are properly worn in public settings. Wearing a mask increases the likelihood of protecting yourself and others, while minimizing the risk of another shutdown of our local economy,” said John Feary, acting Claremore city manager.

Exemptions include those who fall into the CDC’s guidance for those who should not wear face coverings due to a medical or mental health condition or developmental disability, those who are eating or drinking, those who are exercising in communal outdoor spaces while social distancing, those participating in team athletic events or swimming and those receiving dental services and medical treatments. Face coverings are not required in any non-public area, such as a private office or work area, as long as the persons present are able to maintain physical distancing from others not from the same household.

Though there is no penalty directly related to non-compliance, individuals refusing to comply with the ordinance are subject to prosecution under criminal trespass, disturbing the peace, disorderly conduct or similar offenses as circumstances warrant. Claremore Police will enforce the ordinance.

More information can be found at www.claremorecity.com/COVID.

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