

Anne Arundel County Requires Retail Shoppers and Employees to Wear Masks to Prevent Spread of COVID-19

Posted by [TBN\(Staff\)](#) On 04/14/2020

Annapolis, MD - April 14, 2020 - County Executive Stuart Pittman and Anne Arundel Health Officer Dr. Nilesh Kalyanaraman jointly announced today an Order for Public Safety that requires shoppers to wear face coverings in retail stores beginning Wednesday, April 15. Similarly, employees of retail stores will be required to wear face coverings when in any area of the establishment where they are likely to come in contact with coworkers or the public.

"Our most effective tool to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is for each of us to act as though we are carriers of the virus, because we could be," said County Executive Pittman. "Face coverings in retail businesses by both shoppers and staff will save lives. I fully support Dr. Kalyanaraman's decision to require this protection."

The order was signed by Dr. Kalyanaraman, acting on the authority granted to him as county health officer by Governor Larry Hogan's April 5th executive order. It affects all retail establishments allowed to remain open as essential businesses under the Governor's stay at home order of March 30. The order does not apply to children under 2 years old or those who could not wear a mask without inhibiting their health. Face coverings may be made of cloth or other materials and need not be surgical grade masks such as N95 masks, which should be reserved for health workers.

"Masks protect you and those around you," said Dr. Nilesh Kalyanaraman. "It's an important way each of us can slow the spread of the virus."

In addition to the face covering requirements, the order also requires retail businesses to:

- limit customer capacity to 50% of normal capacity;
- maintain six feet between customers in checkout lines;
- make aisles one-way wherever possible;
- clearly mark social distancing restrictions, including six-foot separations and one-way requirements, on the floor;
- provide access to sanitary restrooms and soap and or hand sanitizer for customers and workers;
- discontinue all self-service food counters; and
- the installation of a physical barrier or shield (e.g., clear Plexiglas or heavy plastic sheeting) between cashiers and customers is highly encouraged.

Any complaints or violations of this order will be investigated by the Anne Arundel County Department of Health. Violations are subject to a maximum \$500 fine. The department has the authority to issue closure orders to businesses who violate this policy if necessary, but Dr. Kalyanaraman has indicated it will first issue warnings.

The Order for Public Safety is available on the county website: <https://aahealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Health-Officer-Order-Face-Coverings.pdf>

For up-to-date information and guidance about COVID-19, visit www.aahealth.org/coronavirus. For general questions about the disease, residents are encouraged to call 2-1-1 or the COVID-19 phone line at 410-222-7256. For non-health related questions, call 410-222-0600. Individuals concerned about medical information should call their healthcare provider.