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News Release

For Immediate Release:

Durham Officials Announce New State of Emergency in the Face of the Delta Variant

Prompt action now can prevent greater restrictions in the future

DURHAM, N.C. – Durham City and County officials announced today that in response to the rising cases of COVID-19 largely resulting from the Delta Variant, a State of Emergency is declared within the County of Durham, and, at the request of the Mayor, within the corporate limits of the City of Durham. The latest State of Emergency will go into effect at 5 p.m. on Monday, August 9th, 2021.

The State of Emergency primarily calls for face coverings to be worn indoors, even among those who are fully vaccinated. Governor Roy Cooper allowed the state's mask restrictions to end last Friday, July 30th and urged residents to follow updated [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines](#) about wearing masks inside.

The [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services](#) along with the CDC have issued guidance calling for all people, to include those are vaccinated, to wear masks in indoor spaces when you are around people you do not live with, in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Durham residents are also encouraged to take advantage of the many places available to get a COVID vaccine including the [Durham County Department of Public Health](#).

Thousands of people travel into Durham County on a daily basis to work, shop, recreate, and seek medical care. Over the past month, the positive rate of infections in Durham County has doubled, from 2.3% to 4.6%, and the number of cases, to include those under the age of 18, is rising. The positive rate of infections in the State of North Carolina is 12.2%.

Officials from health care and local government are working collaboratively to slow the spread of COVID-19 by enacting this new State of Emergency.

In announcing the State of Emergency, Chair Brenda Howerton stated, "I am signing this new State of Emergency for Durham residents because it is important that we leaders do all we can to ensure the health and safety of residents and visitors. Experiencing the impact of the rapidly moving Delta Variant reminds us that we must continue to be vigilant in our efforts by following the 3 Ws-Wear, Wash and Wait."

Mayor Steve Schewel said, "It is unfortunate we are in this situation, but the Delta variant is extremely dangerous. Our local cases have grown exponentially over the last weeks and instituting a mask mandate is once again necessary to contain the spread of COVID-19 and protect yourself and our vulnerable neighbors. The best way to curb the development of variants and stop the spread remains vaccination. Vaccines are safe and highly effective, free, and widely available in Durham. The City & County are also doubling down on our efforts to take vaccines into many of our communities. If you have not been vaccinated, I strongly encourage you to do so today."

Here is a quick summary of the primary areas of Durham's State of Emergency which will go into effect Monday at 5 p.m.:

- Face Coverings must be worn in any indoor public place, business or establishment.
- Face Coverings do not need to be worn by someone who:
 - (1) Should not wear a Face Covering due to any medical or behavioral condition or disability (including, but not limited to, any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to put on or remove the Face Covering without assistance);
 - (2) Is under five (5) years of age;
 - (3) Is actively eating or drinking;
 - (4) Is seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired in a way that requires the mouth to be visible;
 - (5) Is giving a speech or performance for a broadcast, or to an audience, where they maintain a distance a distance of at least 20 feet from the audience. Performers/Presenters/Speakers who have been vaccinated must maintain a distance of at least 10 feet from the audience and for those who are vaccinated and do not face the audience no minimum distance is necessary.
 - (6) Is working at home or is in a personal vehicle;
 - (7) Is temporarily removing their Face Covering to secure government or medical services or for identification purposes;
 - (8) Would be at risk from wearing a Face Covering at work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulations or workplace safety guidelines;
 - (9) Has found that their Face Covering is impeding visibility to operate equipment or a vehicle;or

(10) Is a child whose parent, guardian, or responsible person has been unable to place the Face Covering safely on the child's face.

The State of Emergency also allows an accommodation for businesses to apply if someone offers an “acceptable exemption” to wearing a face covering. In such cases, a business may offer curbside service, provide home delivery, or use another reasonable measure to deliver goods or services.

For more information and to view the entire State of Emergency Declaration, click here: [LINK?](#)

Additional resources to consider for COVID-19 information include:

Centers for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/guidance>

For more information about COVID-19, visit the Durham County Department of Public Health’s webpage at: www.dcopublichealth.org/COVID19

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