

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee
The Governing Board, Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority

Date: July 9, 2020



From : Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA

Subject: **Compliance with Social Distancing and Face Covering Guidance in Ventura County**

Background: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is well known; moreover increasing scientific evidence points toward airborne transmission of the virus.

See <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02058-1> and references cited therein.

This fact is of special concern in the management of recreation areas such as trails, picnic areas, parking lots, and points of interest where it is difficult and frequently impossible to consistently maintain the six foot social distance between non-household members that is encouraged by health department guidance.

In general, Ventura County has opted for the FAQ question and answer format to communicate health orders.

https://vcportal.ventura.org/CEO/VCNC/VC_Public_Health_Officer_Order_June-11-2020.pdf

Where there is no specific direction, Ventura County has provided that, “State guidances which are not expressly conditioned on approval of local health officers have not been listed . . . but remain in force and effect under State authority.” (6-11-20 Order, p. 3.)

California Department of Public Health guidance is here:

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Guidance-for-Face-Coverings_06-18-2020.pdf

This requires cloth covering “[w]hile outdoors in public spaces when maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet from persons who are not members of the same household or residence is not feasible.” (6-29-20 Revision p. 2.)

Authority: This order is issued according to the recommendation of the Chief Staff Counsel and is promulgated by authority of the Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains

Conservancy to “administer the affairs of the conservancy” pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 33212 of the Public Resources Code and subdivision (b) of Section 33211.5 of the Public Resources Code that provides, *inter alia*, “[t]rails, campsites, and other public use areas on property owned or subject to the management of the conservancy shall be designated and posted with prohibited activities and use restrictions clearly indicated, including, but not limited to . . . other activities that affect the safety of visitors, campers, [and] trail users”

With respect to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, this order is issued by the Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy acting *ex officio* as Executive Officer of the Authority pursuant to Section 10.1 of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement.

SOCIAL DISTANCE AND FACIAL COVERING ORDER (VENTURA COUNTY)

Finding: The physical configuration of many of the parking areas, picnic areas, trailheads, and trails themselves within parks and open space in Ventura County managed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and/or the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority make social distancing difficult, and literally impossible to predict who or what will be around the corner. The solution to this problem is for all users to have on their person a cloth covering that can be donned sufficiently in advance to provide a measure of protection when the six foot social distance is impinged upon.

Summary:

- All persons shall maintain a safe ***social distance*** of at least six (6) feet wherever possible on park and open space property.
- All persons shall wear a ***cloth face covering*** over both the nose and mouth whenever they are or can be in contact with or walking near or past others who are non-household members in public spaces, whether indoors or outdoors.
- The foregoing provisions apply to all park and open space property within Ventura County owned or managed by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, any joint powers authority for whom the Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy serves as the Executive Officer, and land--wherever situated--owned by the State of California acting by and through the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

Exemptions:

- Children under two years of age;
- Persons with a disability affecting masking, and generally any other person exempted by the

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California Department of Public Health guidance, cited above.

- Persons in residential property or office space, provided that rules otherwise applicable to such space are complied with.

Internet Notice: This order shall be available on the World Wide Web pages of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority and other convenient social media platforms.

Posting: Signs clearly conveying the general content of this order shall be prominently posted at park entrances, trail heads, and parking areas.