



Randall Hutto
County Mayor
Wilson County Government

Contact:

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July 17, 2020 (Wilson County, TN) On July 3rd, Governor Lee signed Executive Order 54 granting county mayors in 89 Tennessee counties the authority to issue local mask requirements in the event of a significant rise in COVID-19 cases. After careful consideration, I am issuing a county-wide Executive Order requiring the wearing of face masks, if you can, outside the exclusions listed in the executive order, in public places, wherever you can, that you cannot properly maintain 6 feet of social distance. It is imperative that all Wilson County citizens work together to slow the spread of COVID-19.

This decision has not been made in haste nor was it a decision to be made by the Wilson County Commission. The authority has been given *solely* to county mayors by Governor Lee. On June 24th, we issued an order strongly encouraging the wearing of face masks in public. This was a response to Wilson County being named a “hotspot” by Dr. Piercey during Governor Lee’s press conference on June 23rd. Our numbers have continued to climb since this date. Certainly, an influx in testing does contribute to an increase positive cases; however, it’s important to look at all the data:

- June 7th to July 7th (a period of one month) the total number of cases more than doubled from 475 to 999. Also, on June 7th, the 14-day average number of cases was 8.6 per day. Today, the 14-day average is 39.5 per day.
- June 15th to July 7th, the average number of people testing positive increased from 5.7% to 7.2%. Today, 8.1% of people tested are positive.
- July 13th, Wilson County saw its highest increase in cases (74). We hit this number again just three days later, July 16th.

On July 8th we held a press conference. I was joined by local healthcare professionals, city/county leaders, school superintendents, law enforcement, EMS, local fire departments and chamber presidents (COVID Taskforce members). Each entity presented strong cases about the importance of wearing masks in public.

Wilson County has provided information to the public for residents to make good choices regarding protecting yourself and others from COVID-19. We have made public statements through social media and with Public Service Announcements on Wilson County Television. Other government entities have made similar posts strongly encouraging people to wear masks

when in public and when near other people. Many local businesses have joined the Blue-Ribbon initiative to show their commitment to the TN Pledge. These efforts have not been in vain, but it is now clear that wearing masks in public places (with some exclusions in the Executive Order) must become mandatory.

As we navigate this pandemic, we realize that questions are inevitable. Often, we have a “knee jerk” reaction to a situation before digesting all the information. I would urge you to read the attached executive order in its entirety. The answers to many questions may lie within. The full executive order will be available on our website at www.wilsoncountyttn.gov.

Many have asked how a mandate will affect the school system. Per Governor Lee’s Order, unless extended, my authority to mandate wearing masks expires on August 3rd therefore having no effect on any decision made by the school board.

Everyone in Wilson County has a duty to be responsible and do their part to slow the spread of this virus. Healthcare professionals nation-wide have recommended that wearing a face mask, along with other recommended guidelines, is the most effective way to slow the spread of COVID-19. If community action is not taken, the spread will continue to intensify thus affecting our daily activities. This action is necessary to ensure not only everyone’s safety but also that local businesses can remain open and schools can re-open this fall. Allowing this spread to continue puts our health, economy and way of life at risk. During the aftermath of the March 3rd tornado, Wilson County exhibited the true spirit of “helping your neighbor.” Now, we find ourselves faced with a new challenge, but it can be overcome. Help your neighbor once more by wearing a face mask. This Executive Order will remain in effect until 12:00 a.m., Central Daylight Time, on August 3, 2020. This Order shall be effective at 11:59 P.M., July 19, 2020 and shall be reissued in accordance and in conjunction with executive orders from Governor Lee regarding the wearing of face masks.

Respectfully,



Randall Hutto

Wilson County Mayor