

Evers declares new public health emergency, issues mask mandate

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Citing a rise in COVID-19 cases, Gov. Tony Evers today issued a new public health emergency and along with a mandate that people wear a mask while indoors.

Under the mandate, effective Saturday, those 5 and older are required to wear a face covering when they're inside or an enclosed space, other than a private residence, and around those who aren't members of their household.

His executive order also strongly recommends face coverings in other settings, including outdoors, when it isn't possible to maintain social distancing.

The mask order comes after Evers has said in recent weeks that he hesitated to issue such a mandate because he believed Republicans would sue to overturn it and he'd lose before the state Supreme Court.

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"While I know emotions are high when it comes to wearing face coverings in public, my job as governor is to put people first and to do what's best for the people of our state, so that's what I am going to do," Evers said.

The mask order was issued under a new public health emergency for 60 days.

It also likely sets up another legal clash with GOP lawmakers.

The mask order comes with several exceptions such as while eating or drinking; sleeping; swimming; and if wearing one while at work would create a hazard.

There are also exemptions from the mandate for those who have trouble breathing; those who are unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the

covering without help; and those incarcerated.

The order, which is enforceable by a civil forfeiture of up to \$200, also doesn't cover state facilities overseen by the state Legislature or the state Supreme Court.

See the [order](#).

See the [mandate](#).