

# Boston Mayor Walsh: Everyone Wear a Mask When Leaving Home

People across Massachusetts started wearing masks in public in noticeable numbers Saturday, adjusting to the latest aspect of the new COVID-19 normal a day after new federal guidance recommended “simple cloth face coverings” in public settings.

The Centers for Disease Control said cloth face coverings could ‘slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.” The government said coverings could be made from household items at home, and was a voluntary measure.

At a press conference with first responders Sunday in Foxborough, Gov. Charlie Baker at one point waved his own hands to emphasize that hands “are in many respects one of the primary carriers of this thing” and people need to be vigilant about hand-washing, using sanitizer, and wiping down doorknobs and surfaces.

“One of the things they have said about masks is it keeps your hands away from your mouth, which is also a good thing,” Baker said.

The governor explained his understanding about the guidance, saying the “primary purpose” of it is to have people wear masks when in places where social distancing is difficult to ensure they don’t infect someone else.

“We’re going to do everything we can to make sure we continue to engage in the social distancing,” Baker said, flanked by a backdrop of mostly law enforcement officials who were not wearing masks.

In its new guidance, the CDC said, “We now know from recent studies that a significant portion of individuals with

coronavirus lack symptoms ('asymptomatic') and that even those who eventually develop symptoms ('pre-symptomatic') can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity – for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing – even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms.”

Baker called the Centers for Disease Control guidance “perfectly appropriate.”

A few hours later at Boston City Hall, Mayor Martin Walsh held a coronavirus update, standing at a podium with a backdrop of people wearing masks, and talking about his plans to wear one made by a city councilor.

Walsh said 15 people have died in Boston from COVID-19 and confirmed cases rose 27 percent over 48 hours.

“That’s what a surge looks like and we are still at the beginning of the surge,” the mayor said.

Walsh’s messaging on masks differed from Baker’s.

“I’m asking everyone and anyone to wear a mask covering their face when you leave your house,” Walsh said. “That means shopping, going for a walk. That means working on a construction site or at work. Any essential workers, we’re asking you to do the same. Anything outside your home.”

Scarfs, bandanas or any type of cloth may be used for a mask, Walsh said, and people should make sure they are able to breath comfortably while wearing masks. The city is providing masks to its employees who must work outside their homes, he said, and helping others to acquire masks.

“We can all help slow the spread by covering our faces,” he said. “It’s important to understand that covering does not protect you from infection. Physical distancing is still one hundred percent necessary. You need to keep at least six feet

away from other people even when you are wearing a face covering, but face coverings will help slow the spread of the virus. That's because up to about 25 percent of the people who are infected are not showing symptoms right now. Many are still out and about because they don't feel sick."

The mayor said he would be wearing a face covering made by City Councilor Annissa Essaibi George, who is part of the Boston Area Mask Initiative. His press office released a photo of the mayor wearing a mask.

The initiative indicated on its website Monday that more than 110 organizations have requested masks, with more than 15,000 masks sought and more than 5,400 masks sewn and distributed so far.