

Workers dealing with customers in New Bedford required to wear face coverings

New Bedford, Massachusetts – Mayor Jon Mitchell and the New Bedford Board of Health have acted to protect workers and customers at essential businesses, announcing new requirements to ensure the use of masks by employees while interacting with the public.

Under the City's order, all essential businesses operating under the state's current restrictions, such as food vendors and restaurants, must require employees who receive payment or serve customers to wear a surgical mask, or a cloth face covering that covers the nose and face, while performing their duties.

Employees who interact with the public in this way include cashiers, baggers, counter attendants, wait staff, drive-through servers, and deliverers. The mask or face covering must be worn when performing these duties interacting with the public unless the employees are separated from customers through a partition.

Employers and businesses will be required to supply masks or face coverings to their employees. As the order goes into effect, the City will work together with local businesses to ensure they are able to comply with this order. The order goes into effect on April 14, and will be enforced beginning the weekend of April 18, 2020. Businesses violating the order after cooperation with the City will be subject to a \$100 fine per day per noncompliant employee.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have

recommended that face coverings be worn in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, such as essential businesses including grocery stores and pharmacies. The City's order requires employees interacting with the public to observe this guidance; the Health Department also urges residents to heed the CDC's guidance on face coverings, available at the CDC website (www.cdc.gov), a link to which is available on the City's website.

Mayor Mitchell declared a state of emergency in New Bedford on March 13 due to the COVID-19 outbreak and has acted to enforce social distancing measures and protect residents. The City has since announced measures to safeguard public health, including the closure of personal care businesses, restricting public access to city buildings, modifications to city parks and facilities, and strong requirements to ensure the protection of residents of senior living facilities and nursing homes.