



Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQ”) for Secretarial Directive

January 6, 2021

This FAQ provides guidance for the implementation of the Secretarial Directive issued on January 6, 2021.

Below are frequently asked questions (“FAQs”) and their answers. In addition, individuals should check with local governments to determine whether additional restrictions have been imposed in their local jurisdictions to limit the spread of COVID-19.

This information is subject to change in light of new CDC guidance, Executive Orders, additional Secretarial Directives, and/or local government declarations.

When does this Secretarial Directive take effect?

The information covered in this Secretarial Directive is effective immediately on January 6, 2021 and will remain in place until further notice.

Is this Directive enforceable?

No, the Secretarial Directive is not enforceable through civil or criminal penalty. It sets out the immediate actions and critical information that the people of North Carolina can use to slow the spread of COVID-19, save lives and protect our hospital capacity.

Why is this Directive more restrictive on what I can do than the Governor’s Orders?

The Governor’s Executive Orders on COVID-19 establish the requirements that all North Carolinians must adhere to under the declared State of Emergency. However, the Secretarial Directive sets out the immediate actions and critical information that the people of North Carolina can use to slow the spread of COVID-19, save lives and protect our hospital capacity.

What can I do to reduce my risk of getting COVID-19?

All individuals in North Carolina should wear a mask over the nose and mouth at all times when they are with people they do not live with, and in public settings including retail businesses, health care settings, and places of worship. It is also very important to maintain physical distance (at least 6 feet) from people to the maximum extent possible in addition to wearing a mask.

Individuals should not enter any indoor public spaces where people are not wearing masks or if you see crowds of people who are not physically distanced.

Why are the 3Ws (Wear a face covering, Wash hands frequently, and Wait 6 feet apart from others) all important?

Face coverings continue to be the most effective way of slowing the spread of COVID-19, along with social distancing and washing hands. Face coverings do not replace the need for social distancing or washing hands. All three actions are needed to reduce the risk of spread.

Why does the Secretarial Directive tell individuals to stay at home?

The most important thing to do to reduce your risk of transmission of COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to people who may be positive and not know it. Individuals should stay home as much as possible and only go out in public to essential activities like going to work or school, to seek health care, or buy food.

The Governor's Modified Stay at Home Executive Order continues, and individuals are required be at home between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., unless an exception applies.

What does this Secretarial Directive say for those at higher risk for severe illness?

Individuals who are over 65 years old or at high-risk for developing serious illness are advised to stay home and use curb side pick-up or delivery services for food, medicine, and retail shopping needs.

What do individuals need to consider when gathering with friends and family members?

All individuals should avoid gathering with people that they do not live with. People from multiple households should not gather. If you cannot avoid being with those you do not live with, wear a mask the entire time, keep the gathering outdoors and as small as possible. Avoid activities, such as eating, wear you need to remove your mask.

Individuals should also avoid settings where people may congregate in large numbers, such as entertainment venues.

I gathered with friends and family over the holidays. What can I do now to reduce my risk of spreading COVID-19?

If you have gathered with others who you do not live with, especially indoors, you should assume you may have become infected and get tested. Even if you do not have symptoms, you could have COVID-19 and be spreading virus to others, including those who may be at increased risk for severe illness.

What are other things that individuals can do to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in NC?

1. Download the [SlowCOVIDNC app](#) and share with friends and family; if you test positive, enter your pin into the app to notify close contacts to get tested.
2. Get a flu shot.
3. Get the [COVID-19 vaccine](#) when it is available to you.