



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0423, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

Approval of Amendment No. 1 to Valdez COVID-19 Public Health Mandate #003

SUBMITTED BY: Mark Detter, City Manager

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Amendment No. 1 to Valdez COVID-19 Public Health Mandate #003

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

On July 7, 2020, Valdez City Council approved Valdez COVID-19 Public Health Mandate #003, requiring all people in Valdez over the age of five to wear a protective mask or cloth face covering that covers the mouth and nose in public settings or communal spaces outside the home where social distancing of six feet cannot be maintained. The original mandate is attached for reference.

Health Mandate #003 became effective at 5:00 p.m. on July 10, 2020. Current mandate language states it "shall be reviewed on September 15, 2020, and thereafter as recommended by the Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command". This language indicates the mandate remains in effect indefinitely, unless rescinded by Valdez City Council at the recommendation of the Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command.

The Valdez Unified Command strongly recommends Health Mandate #003 remain in effect for the following reasons:

1. Both the CDC and Alaska Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS) recommend wearing cloth face coverings when around people outside your household to help mitigate transmission of the virus which causes COVID-19.
 - a. CDC face covering website:
<<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face>>
 - b. DHSS face covering website:
<<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/coveryourface.aspx?>>
 - c. DHSS webpage summarizing scientific studies on face covering effectiveness:
<<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/facecoverings.aspx?>>

2. Under the current threshold criteria set by the Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command (attached), we remain in Phase 2 as there continue to be outbreaks in other Alaskan communities.
3. Health impacts from travel in and out of the Valdez community over the Labor Day long weekend will not be known for several weeks following the holiday.
4. As we move into the fall season and weather changes, the likelihood of social activities moving indoors increases.
5. Low local case counts indicate local mitigation measures, which include the mask mandate, are working.
6. Small individual actions, such as wearing cloth face coverings as outlined in the mask mandate, help prevent our community from dealing with more impactful COVID-19 mitigation measures, such as closures or capacity limitations for businesses or schools.
7. An ample local supply of cloth face coverings exists for those in the community who may continue to need them.
8. Based on reports by public health officials, we will likely have a better idea on the status of a COVID-19 vaccination by mid-November 2020.

Therefore, Valdez Unified Command recommends City Council approve Amendment No. 1 of Valdez COVID-19 Public Health Mandate #003. The new language in the amendment states the mandate “shall remain in effect until November 18, 2020 unless otherwise extended or rescinded by Valdez City Council, after considering recommendations from Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command”. This language provides clear direction of when, how, and why the mandate will be reviewed moving forward.

Procedural note: If the City Council votes against Amendment No. 1 as presented, Valdez COVID-19 Public Health Mandate #003 will still remain in effect. Under current mandate language, September 15, 2020 was established simply as a “first review” date. City Council must take formal action to rescind the mandate as it is currently written. If the desire of the City Council is to rescind the mandate, the effective date contained in Amendment No. 1 could simply be amended to an earlier date.