



City of Merrill

Police Department

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Citizens of Merrill,

On July 30, 2020 Governor Evers issued Executive Order #82 and Emergency Order #1 mandating the use of face coverings in most circumstances. There currently exists debate about the lawfulness of the Emergency Order, efficacy of enforcement, and policy implications. All of which raise a lot of questions and analysis as it relates to the use of police resources in this circumstance. Additionally, you should understand that your local law enforcement and prosecutors have discussed the mandate thoroughly.

At this time the Merrill Police Department will not be responding to, investigating, or actively seeking enforcement of violations related to this order. I should note that in the Governor's FAQ regarding this Emergency Order, the following guidance is given:

"What do I do if I see someone not wearing a mask, even though they should be? Nothing. Some people have conditions or circumstances that would make wearing a cloth face covering difficult or dangerous. Just wear your mask and stay six feet away."

This enforcement decision does not relieve us all of the responsibility to respect the decisions of equally free people or businesses in our community. Businesses have always had the ability to set their own policies requiring face coverings to protect their employees and patrons. We will always respond to assist individuals and businesses in maintaining peace and order when their policy decisions are not given the respect they are due.

This enforcement decision does not address the larger issue of public health. We encourage our citizens to become engaged and informed on all public health matters. Our common resource is the Lincoln County Health Department which provides up-to-date information on all public health issues in Lincoln County. Please follow the guidance they provide. <https://co.lincoln.wi.us/health>

Sincerely,

Corey A Bennett, Chief of Police

"Serving Merrill with Pride"