



Categorical Exclusion Documentation Form (CE Form)

Project: Implementation of Executive Order 13991, Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing, through 2/2/2021 NPS Deputy Director Memo, Implementing and Enforcing Mask-Wearing Requirements for Park Visitors and subsequent park 36 C.F.R 1.5 compendium changes

Description of Action (Project Description):

E.O. 13991 directs federal agencies to:

“... immediately take action, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law, to require compliance with [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] guidelines with respect to wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and other public health measures by: on-duty or on-site Federal employees; on-site Federal contractors; and all persons in Federal buildings or on Federal lands.”

The 2/2/2021 Deputy Director’s Memorandum (Memo) provides the following direction to Superintendents:

“In order to protect the health and safety of NPS employees, volunteers, partners and contractors, and park visitors, superintendents must implement mask-wearing requirements for park visitors, using the authority in 36 CFR 1.5(a)(2). This authority allows superintendents to impose restrictions on activities within park areas for the maintenance of public health and safety.

Superintendents must use the following language in their park’s compendium for this purpose: Individuals over the age of two years must wear masks, except when actively eating or drinking, in the following locations:

1. All common areas and shared workspaces in buildings owned, rented or leased by the National Park Service, including, but not limited to, park visitor centers, administrative offices, lodges, gift shops and restaurants.

2. The following outdoor areas, when others are present, where the superintendent has determined that physical distancing (staying at least six feet apart) cannot reasonably be maintained:

- [e.g., outdoor areas adjacent to visitor centers]
- [e.g., parking lots and common areas in campgrounds]
- [e.g., crowded trails, viewpoints, and other areas of interest] • [e.g., covered structures that attract crowds such a memorials and open-air pavilions]

Masks must cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face. Masks not designed to be protective, masks with ventilation valves, and face shields do not meet the requirement.

If a park has indoor locations where visitors are allowed but does not have any outdoor locations where physical distancing cannot be maintained, item 2 from the model compendium language may be omitted. Compendium actions requiring visitors to wear masks must be justified in a written determination that is made available to the public upon request. These written determinations may be placed in the compendium immediately after the action.

Superintendents must include mask-wearing requirements in the terms and conditions of permits for events or activities that will take place inside or in outdoor areas where physical distancing (staying at least six feet apart) cannot be reasonably maintained. These terms and conditions must include the same requirements about the proper fitting and type of masks that are included above in the model compendium language.”

Project Locations: All NPS Units

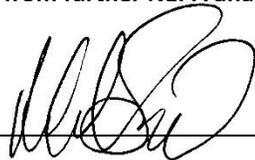
CE Citation: 3.3 D.2. Minor changes in amounts or types of visitor use for the purpose of ensuring visitor safety or resource protection in accordance with existing regulations.

CE Justification: Mask-wearing requirements are a minor change to visitor use in NPS units. These requirements may result in minor changes to the types and amounts of use by visitors as visitors may interact differently with the NPS workforce and other visitors when wearing a mask. Some visitors who may have avoided a park when masks were not required may visit a park if they know masks are required while others may not visit if they are required to wear a mask. A small number of visitors may resist wearing a mask and may need to be redirected to appropriate areas where masks are not necessary per the Memo. Overall, the requirement itself is a minor change since visitors will still have access to the same areas of the park, will still be able to participate in the same activities in the park and will receive the same information in the park. Park visitation at individual parks is not likely to change meaningfully due to the mask mandate. Many parks have had steady visitation during the pandemic and this is unlikely to change visitation in a meaningful way since many states already have mask mandates and visitors are already used to wearing them.

The purpose of the requirement is to ensure visitor and workforce safety. As noted in the Memo, masks protect others as well as the wearer. COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets. Masks are a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from reaching others. Masks can prevent the spread of the disease even when the wearer is not sick. This is because several studies have found that people with COVID-19 who never develop symptoms (asymptomatic) and those who are not yet showing symptoms (presymptomatic) can still spread the virus to other people. The mask-wearing requirement is in accordance with existing regulations (it does not conflict with other regulations or policy). NPS is using one CE to cover compendium changes for all NPS Units because, while mask requirements may be different for each NPS Unit, the impacts of requiring mask-wearing and anticipated changes in visitor use are the same regardless of location; the same general impacts can be assumed for all parks.

Decision: I find that the action fits within the categorical exclusion above. Therefore, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No extraordinary circumstances apply.

Signature: _____



Date: 2/22/2021

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Extraordinary Circumstances:

If implemented, would the proposal...	Yes/No	Notes
<p>A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?</p>	No	<p>Mask-wearing poses no significant adverse effect on public health and safety. Wearing a mask improves public health by protecting both the wearer and those around the mask-wearer. This has a meaningful beneficial impact on the health of individuals and can lower virus rates in communities. Mask-wearing contributes to the national goal articulated in the EO to help reduce the spread of the disease on the national level. A list of references discussing the benefits of wearing masks is provided at the end of this document.</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html#evidence-effectiveness;</p>
<p>B. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas?</p>	No	<p>Implementing mask-wearing requirements does not have significant impact on any natural or cultural resources in a park. An indirect effect of mask-wearing may be an increase in trash if visitors use disposable masks. If disposable masks are not disposed of in trash receptacles, this trash may end up in parks and may result in minor adverse impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat. The impacts are not expected to be significant however, because many wearers will be using reusable masks and many visitors will properly dispose of disposable masks so the issue at any one park should not be significant. See <i>The environmental impact of abandoned face masks</i></p> <p>https://environmentjournal.online/articles/the-environmental-impact-of-abandoned-face-masks/; <i>'More masks than jellyfish': coronavirus waste ends up in ocean</i> https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/08/more-masks-than-jellyfish-coronavirus-waste-ends-up-in-ocean;</p>
<p>C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?</p>	No	<p>There is no conflict over resources from requiring masks.</p>
<p>D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?</p>	No	<p>There are minimal to no environmental effects of wearing masks. There are no unknown environmental or unique or unknown risks associated with mask wearing.</p>

E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?	No	Requiring mask-wearing does not establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle. The action implements an executive order that is only in effect because of an international pandemic and it is unlikely that this action would be required in the future absent another pandemic or site-specific outbreak.
F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?		Consistent with the CEQ NEPA regulations, this extraordinary circumstance no longer applies.
G. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by either the bureau or office?	No	This action has no impact on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by either the bureau or office.
H. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?	No	This action has no impact on threatened or endangered species.
I. Violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?	No	This action does not conflict with any federal, state, local or tribal law nor other regulations or policies imposed for the protection of the environment.
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898)?	No	This action applies equally to all park visitors and does not disproportionately impact low income or minority populations.
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)?	No	This action does not limit access to Indian sacred sites of Federal Lands or adversely affect sacred sites. Visitors may be required to wear masks when visiting these sites, depending on their location, whether they are outside, etc., but mask do not preclude access or change the integrity of the resources. Masks may protect the human health of visitors to these sites.
L. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?	No	This action has no impact on invasive or exotic species. Masks should not introduce new invasive or exotic species into the environment.

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