



State of Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel

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AG Nessel, Better Business Bureau Warn of Fake ‘Face Mask Exempt’ Cards

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel and the Better Business Bureau Serving Eastern Michigan & the Upper Peninsula are warning Michiganders about fraudulent cards that falsely claim to exempt the holder from wearing face coverings in businesses and other areas where such personal protective equipment is required.

As the country continues to grapple with COVID-19, certain groups like the Freedom to Breathe Agency have made available Face Mask Exempt Cards to residents as an attempt to bypass health and safety measures at retailers and other establishments.

While the group’s Facebook page and website are no longer active, Freedom to Breathe Agency was offering a downloadable PDF of the exemption cards. Some of these cards may have a logo for the Freedom to Breathe Agency, and even the U.S. Department of Justice. The cards also contain an implied threat that any business that denies access for failure to wear a mask will be reported as having violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The cards are not legitimate and related face mask-exemption flyers and similar information being circulated by such groups are [not endorsed by the Department of Justice](#) or other government agencies.

“These groups are trying to spread misinformation about the use of face coverings, and the unfortunate outcome is that they are also endangering the lives of many people,” Nessel said. “Business owners should understand that these face mask exempt cards are fake, and people should continue to wear face coverings unless the individual is unable medically to tolerate one.”

“This group, along with others, are attempting to pass themselves off as government agencies and are using fear as their tactic to get businesses to comply with their demands,” said Melanie Duquesnel, President and CEO of Better Business Bureau Serving Eastern Michigan & the Upper Peninsula. “We all need to be doing our part by wearing a mask in public unless one is, truthfully, medically unable to do so.”

In Michigan, face coverings are required under Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's executive orders in many situations and venues. Today, for example, [Gov. Whitmer issued a new executive order](#) that requires businesses to refuse entry to people who fail to wear a face covering as required by the executive order. A willful violation of that order is subject to a misdemeanor fine of \$500.

The use of face coverings during the COVID-19 pandemic is widely supported, including by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

The CDC notes that face coverings should be worn in public settings around people who don't live in the same household and when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Cloth face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus, and are most likely to reduce the spread of the virus when they are widely used by people in public settings, according to the CDC. For more information on the effectiveness of cloth face coverings, [visit the CDC's website](#).

MDHHS recommends the use of face coverings even for healthy individuals, and offers guidance for the [use of face coverings for the general public online](#). MDHHS has additional information on its website, including how masks work and a [chart showing the chance of COVID-19 transmission](#) among individuals wearing masks and those who do not.