



For Immediate Release:
June 30, 2020

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News Release

GEMA/HS Releasing Three Million Cloth Face Coverings to Counties, Department of Education

(ATLANTA) – The Office of Governor Brian P. Kemp announced the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency is releasing a total of three million cloth face coverings in July, to the Georgia Department of Education and 39 county emergency management agencies across the state.

The cloth face coverings are washable and reusable, and will help protect citizens, teachers and students as they prepare to return to school and work in the coming months.

“The distribution of these face coverings is in line with current CDC guidance suggesting that they be used when social distancing measures are hard to maintain,” said GEMA/HS Director Homer Bryson. “Since many carriers of COVID-19 are asymptomatic, they can unwittingly spread the disease to those around them. Wearing a face covering is a simple step that can be taken to reduce the risk of transmission by those infected.”

The Department of Education will receive two million of the face coverings to provide to students and teachers as they return for the new school year. School systems will have the flexibility to determine how to distribute the masks.

“As we plan for a return to school this fall, we have worked to provide guidance that is realistic in the K-12 setting, provides for the best possible educational experience for students and – most importantly – keeps students, teachers, staff, and families safe,” State School Superintendent Richard Woods said. “Having access to face coverings is critical as our districts and schools plan for a safe return, and I am grateful for the leadership and partnership of Governor Kemp and GEMA.”

For more information on the Georgia Department of Public Health and Georgia Department of Education’s guidance for a safe return to in-person instruction, visit gadoe.org/K12recovery. For information on Georgia public schools’ COVID-19 response, visit www.gadoe.org/coronavirus.

Counties receiving the masks were identified by the Department of Public Health as areas where infection rates are rising or there may be increased risk of transmission. Each county

EMA will develop a plan to distribute the face coverings in their communities, paying special attention to the homeless population and economically challenged areas.

As part of the Office of the Governor, GEMA/HS works with local, state and federal governments, in partnership with the private sector and faith-based community, to protect life and property against man-made and natural emergencies. In addition, GEMA/HS employees are on 24-hour call statewide to assist local authorities when disaster strikes. GEMA/HS's *Ready Georgia* campaign helps Georgians prepare for disasters. Go to gema.ga.gov for information on developing a custom emergency plan and Ready kit.

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