



REPUBLIC OF PALAU
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

SURANGEL WHIPPS, JR.
President

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PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE NO. 21-49

To Require Mask Wearing by all National Government employees when in Executive Branch Buildings and Offices

WHEREAS, the people of the Republic of Palau have taken tremendous steps to be proactive against COVID-19 by becoming fully vaccinated, with over 95% of our population being fully vaccinated; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of individuals have also received a booster shot when eligible; and

WHEREAS, the Omicron variant has tested the current COVID-safe protocols due to its highly transmissible nature and for the first time Palau is experiencing sustained increases in its Active Case counts; and

WHEREAS, just as the COVID-19 virus is evolving, so too must our COVID-safe protocols in order to keep our communities and most vulnerable members safe and prevent the hospital system from becoming overburdened; and

WHEREAS, the science is clear that one of the easiest ways to transmit COVID-19 is through unmasked close contact in an indoor setting, and this transmission opportunity is exacerbated by long durations of contact such as office settings; and

WHEREAS, in order to model the best practices that we highly encourage others to adopt, government employees entering or remaining in government buildings and offices of the Executive Branch shall be required to be masked;

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the Republic of Palau, pursuant to the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Palau, it is hereby directed that:

1. Beginning today, January 13, 2022, all government employees shall be required to wear a mask when entering or remaining in government buildings or offices of the Executive Branch and all authorities, boards, and commissions.
2. This Directive shall apply to all employees of the Executive Branch and all authorities, boards, and commissions, no matter their status as civil service employees, exempt employees, contract workers, consultants, seasonal workers, full or part time employees, or any other status in which the employee receives compensation with public funds.
3. A mask shall meet the requirements of this Directive if it:



- (a) has two or more layers of woven cloth, such as cotton; and
- (b) can be secured with ties or straps around the head or behind the ears; and
- (c) does not have mesh or other porous fabrics that allow unfiltered exhalation.

4. This Directive shall remain in effect until such time as local transmission of COVID-19 has been eliminated for a period of seven (7) consecutive days. This Directive may be reinstated by public announcement should the incidents of local transmission return and increase by at least 50% over a seven (7) day period. Local transmission shall be defined as transmission from one person who has not traveled within the last 5 days to another who has not traveled within the last 5 days.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunder set my hand this 13th day of January 2022
in Koror, Republic of Palau.

Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau