

Coronavirus: Be prepared to wear a mask if needed, health minister says

Michael Daly 14:43, Aug 06 2020

Daly, 2020

COVID Timeline 29 January 2020

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Health Minister Chris Hipkins talks about public use of masks, should community transmission happen again in New Zealand.

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The Government is urging people to add face masks to their household emergency kits, in case there's further community transmission of Covid-19.

"The World Health Organisation suggests that people should be prepared for the use of masks before the need to use them arises," Health Minister Chris Hipkins said at a briefing on Thursday.

"So the ministry is now recommending that as part of collective preparations for any future outbreak of Covid-19, households add sufficient masks for everybody normally resident in their household to their emergency supply kits."



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The New Zealand Sock Company has started making merino reusable face masks.

Those masks did not need to be medical grade. They could be reusable or the single use masks seen online and in shops, he said.

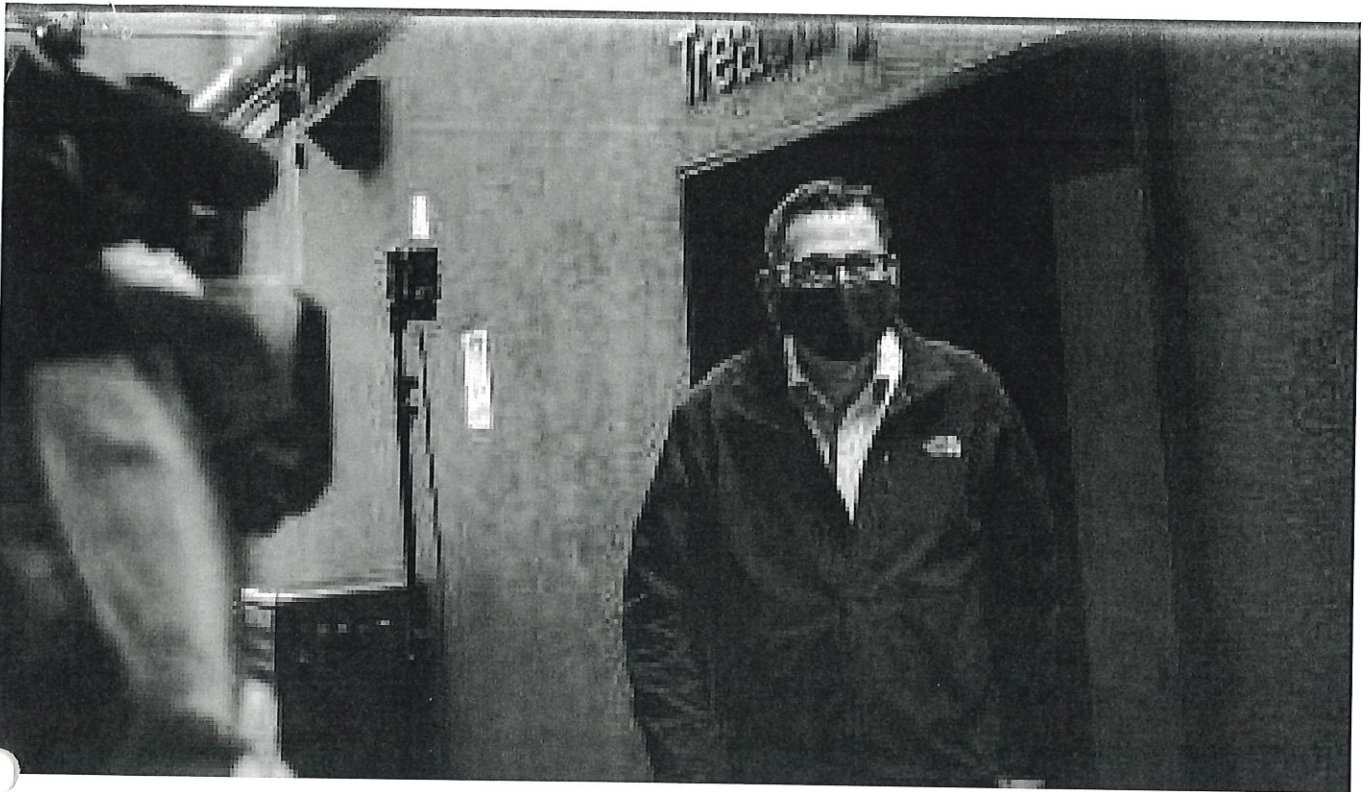
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"Masks will be most useful when Covid-19 is present in the community and people are mingling in close proximity to each other, like at work or in social situations.

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"Currently at Alert Level 1, which is where we're at today, it is not necessary for the public to wear masks because there is no evidence of community transmission here in New Zealand," Hipkins said.



CHRIS HOPKINS/THE AGE

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews departs a Covid-19 news conference in Australia wearing a mask.

"If we move to Alert Level 2, the public will be encouraged to wear masks in situations where physical distancing is not possible, such as on public transport or in shops.

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