

**AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE A NEW ARTICLE VII OF CHAPTER 17 OFFENSES---
MISCELLANEOUS OF THE CITY OF VICKSBURG CODE OF ORDINANCES TO PROHIBIT THE
WEARING OF FACE COVERINGS WHICH CONCEALS THE IDENTITY OF THE WEARER AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

WHEREAS, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Vicksburg (hereinafter “Board”) pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated Section 21-17-5 and 21-19-15, 1972 as amended, are authorized to pass ordinances to protect the safety and welfare of the City of Vicksburg; and

WHEREAS, from January 26, 2025 to July 4, 2026, there have been several criminal incidences involving individuals with face coverings intended to conceal their identity; and

WHEREAS, the Board acknowledges that prohibiting face coverings may appear to criminalize a person’s dress code; however, the overriding concern is to protect the public’s safety and welfare by ensuring that a person’s identity is not being concealed from law enforcement or the public; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that such face coverings hinder law enforcement investigations, pose a public safety risk, and contribute to a heightened sense of fear, intimidation and insecurity among citizens in the City of Vicksburg; and

WHEREAS, the Board further finds that there is an increase in individuals wearing face coverings to commit violent crimes or committing violent crimes while wearing face coverings which hinders the thorough investigation of criminal activities by the Vicksburg Police Department; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi Code Annotated Section 21-13-1 authorizes the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Vicksburg (hereinafter “the Board”) to enact ordinances and enforce the same by a fine not exceeding One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) and/or jail not exceeding ninety (90) days; and

WHEREAS, the City of Vicksburg is dedicated to enforcing this ordinance fairly and equitably such that individuals are not being unreasonably harassed or detained for wearing face coverings in the absence of a totality of circumstances that would create a reasonably articulable suspicion of a violation of law.

WHEREAS, the Board finds that it is in the best interests of the City to adopt and establish an ordinance that will prohibit the unlawful use of face coverings in public places while balancing public safety with individual rights and ensuring reasonable exceptions for the lawful use of face coverings, and imposition of penalties.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF VICKSBURG, that Article VII of Chapter 17 titled Offense--Miscellaneous shall be created:

ARTICLE VII-FACE COVERINGS

Section 17-164 – Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to protect the public safety and welfare of the citizens of City of Vicksburg, by prohibiting individuals from wearing face coverings while in a public place or on City of Vicksburg properties.

Section 17-165- Definitions.

- A. Face Covering means any close-fitting garment that covers the head and face, with openings for the eyes, nose or mouth, or any combination thereof, commonly referred to as ski masks or hoods where any portion of the face is so hidden or covered to conceal the identity of the wearer.
- B. Public Place means any location accessible to the general public, including but not limited to streets, sidewalks, parks, shopping centers, schools, recreational facilities or other areas owned, operated or maintained by a public entity.

Section 17-166- Prohibition of Face Coverings in Public Places.

It shall be unlawful for any person to wear a face covering which covers that person's face as to hide, conceal or cover as to conceal his or her identity in a public place within the city limits of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Section 17-166- Exceptions.

No person shall be guilty of violating this code section by:

- 1) Wearing a traditional holiday costume on the occasion of the holiday;
- 2) Lawfully engaging in a trade or employment or in a sporting activity where the mask is worn for the purpose of ensuring the physical safety of the wearer or because of the nature of the occupation, trade, profession, or sporting activity;
- 3) Wearing a face covering for religious purposes;
- 4) Wearing a face covering in a theatrical production;
- 5) Wearing a face covering for health reasons to prevent the spread of an infectious disease;
- 6) Wearing a face covering to protect against an environment hazard including weather conditions; or
- 7) Wearing a face covering while engaging in an activity that is protected by the United States Constitution or the State of Mississippi Constitution.

Section 17-167- Penalties.

- A. Any person who violates this ordinance shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine not less than five hundred dollars (\$500) or to up to ninety (90) days in jail, or both.
- B. Before taking any enforcement actions as it relates to a minor under the age of 18, the Vicksburg Police Department law enforcement officer shall first confer with the minor child and his/her parent or legal guardian about the ordinance and provide a warning of the minor's violation with said warning to be documented on the police records management software. After the warning is provided and documented, any subsequent violation of the ordinance by the minor will result in a fine being assessed against the parent or legal guardian in the amount of \$100.00 for the first violation and \$250.00 for each subsequent violation. Any minor who violates the ordinance more than once shall be transferred to the Warren County Youth Court.

SO ORDAINED this the 10th day of July, 2026.

The Mayor and Aldermen of the
City of Vicksburg, Mississippi

Willis Thompson, Mayor

Thomas J. Mayfield, Alderman

Vickie Y. Bailey, Alderwoman

CERTIFICATE

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

COUNTY OF WARREN

CITY OF VICKSBURG

I, Deborah A. Kaiser-Nickson, the duly and legally appointed, qualified and Acting City Clerk and lawful custodian of the Minutes of the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Vicksburg and Seal of said City, certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of an Ordinance Adopted by The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Vicksburg at an Adjourned Board Meeting held on July 10, 2026.

WITNESS my signature and seal of the City of Vicksburg this the 10th day of July 2026.

Deborah A. Kaiser-Nickson, City Clerk