

ORDINANCE
By Chavez, Osman, Chughtai, and Chowdhury

Amending Title 2, Chapter 18 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Administration—Purchasing.

The City Council of the City of Minneapolis do ordain as follows:

Section 1. That Chapter 18 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances be amended by adding thereto a new Section 18.210 to read as follows:

18.210. Law enforcement joint powers agreements; concealment of identity. (a) *Findings.* The city council makes the following findings:

(1) Transparency and accountability in law enforcement operations are essential to maintaining public trust.

(2) When law enforcement agencies allow officers to obscure their identities, it erodes the trust that is necessary for effective law enforcement, and it harms the general welfare of the residents of the city.

(3) Across the country, law enforcement officers respond to calls in full uniform, including calls to dangerous situations, violent crime, or situations that may threaten their well-being, and do so without relying on a facial covering to obscure their identity.

(4) No justification by law enforcement has been provided to adequately explain why an individual officer's discretion to wear a mask or facial covering to conceal their identity is essential to the operations or safety of law enforcement, and no law requires masking by a law enforcement officer performing their duties.

(5) Masked law enforcement is antithetical to this city's deeply held commitment to government transparency and accountability, and historically, law enforcement officers have been expected to be identifiable when dealing with the public, detaining people, and making arrests.

(6) Absent personal identification or identifiable facial characteristics, masked law enforcement interactions render it nearly impossible to report or hold officers accountable for unprofessional behavior or conduct, even in instances of violent activity.

(7) Minnesota Statutes, section 609.735, has been effective for over one hundred (100) years and provides that it is a misdemeanor for a person to conceal their identity in a public place with a robe, mask, or other disguise unless certain exceptions apply.

(8) Minnesota Statutes, section 609.735, was enacted in 1923 for the primary purpose of preventing Ku Klux Klan activity in the state. *Minnesota Voters Alliance v. Walz*, 492 F. Supp. 3d. 822, 834 (D. Minn. 2020).

(9) The normalization of the use of facial coverings by law enforcement officers has a significant and unquestioned negative impact on public safety and the general welfare of residents of the city, including:

a. Implications for public perception, officer-community interactions, and accountability, and increases the risk of impersonation by unauthorized individuals;

b. Visibility of another's facial features is vital for facilitating both verbal and non-verbal communication, intent, and emotional affect, particularly in stressful or escalating situations;

c. Preventing other law enforcement officers from identifying a masked person as law enforcement and interacting with them accordingly, especially when both officers may be armed;

d. Unnecessary escalations in the community, as whether it is intended or not, members of the public may experience fear or intimidation when approached by officers whose faces are obscured, which heightens defensive behavior or may lead someone to resist physically, verbally, or both;

e. Unnecessary confusion from bystanders who witness law enforcement actions, as an individual would be unable to discern whether the masked individual is perpetrating harm against another, or is a legitimate law enforcement officer performing a valid arrest; and

f. Risks to non-native English speakers, persons with disabilities, persons with speech processing or auditory issues, persons in mental health crisis, or any other physical or mental health reason where an interaction with a masked law enforcement officer becomes extremely difficult.

(10) People with insidious and illegal motives are using the rising trend of unidentifiable law enforcement to pose as law enforcement to enter homes under false pretenses, commit violent crimes, and harass civilians.

(11) In the summer of 2025, the State of Minnesota's political leadership was targeted by a political assassin, who allegedly relied on a life-like realistic facemask and impersonated a law enforcement officer, to commit his horrific acts.

(12) The city finds that masking by law enforcement officers poses significant public safety issues for both the general public and law enforcement officers themselves.

(b) As used in this section, "law enforcement agency" or "agency" means any federal, state, county, metropolitan, or municipal law enforcement agency, department, or division of those governments that is statutorily empowered to act for the detection, investigation, arrest, conviction, detention, or rehabilitation of persons violating the laws of the city, the State of Minnesota, or of the United States.

(c) Regardless of dollar amount, the city may not enter into any law enforcement-related joint powers agreement with any law enforcement agency under Minnesota Statutes section 471.59 unless that agency agrees as a term of the agreement with the city to prohibit its officers from concealing their identity when interacting with the public while performing activities under the agreement within the city of Minneapolis, and that prohibition meets the criteria in subsection (d).

(d) The prohibition must at a minimum prohibit the law enforcement agency's officers from concealing their identity by means of a facial covering, mask, or other disguise when interacting with the Minneapolis public in the performance of their official duties. The prohibition may contain the following exceptions or similar exceptions permitting facial coverings when an officer is:

(1) Actively engaged in and performing their responsibilities in furtherance of an undercover assignment;

(2) Wearing a shield or eye protection that does not conceal the officer's face to protect the officer's face or eyes from harm;

(3) Wearing a medical grade mask or respirator designed to prevent the transmission of disease and has obtained a statement from a licensed physician that the mask or respirator is necessary to protect the health of the officer or the general public;

(4) Wearing air-purifying respirators, self-contained breathing apparatus, or other facial protection to protect themselves against exposure to any toxin, gas, smoke, or any other hazardous or harmful environmental condition, or other recognized physical hazard;

(5) Wearing a helmet that covers the face when operating a motorcycle or other vehicle that requires a helmet for safe operation; or

(6) Assigned to Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team units, or agency equivalent, while actively performing their SWAT responsibilities and where protective gear is used for physical safety.

(e) A request for council action for approval of a joint powers agreement subject to this section between the city and a law enforcement agency that has independent jurisdiction within the city, must include information on whether the agency has a policy that meets the criteria in subsection (d) that applies when it is operating within the city of Minneapolis regardless of whether the agency is operating under the terms of the proposed joint powers agreement with the city.

Section 2. *Effective Date.* This ordinance is effective for joint powers agreements entered into or amended on or after August 31, 2026.