

VOA NEWS

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Walmart will now require customers to wear face coverings at all of its namesake and Sam's Club stores, making it the largest retailer to introduce such a policy that has otherwise proven difficult to enforce without state and federal requirements.

The company said the policy will go into effect on Monday to allow time to inform stores and customers. The Arkansas-based company said that currently, about 65 percent of its more than 5,000 stores and clubs are located in areas where there is already some form of government mandate on face coverings.

The retailer also said it will create the role of health ambassador at its Walmart stores and will station them near the entrance to remind customers without masks of the new requirement.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday the United States would impose visa restrictions on Chinese companies like Huawei Technologies, which he accused of facilitating human rights violations.

Pompeo told a news conference the State Department would impose the visa restrictions on certain employees of Chinese tech companies like Huawei that prop up regimes that violate human rights.

"The State Department will impose visa restrictions on certain employees of the Chinese, of Chinese technology companies like Huawei that provide material support to regimes engaging in human rights violations and abuses globally."

Asked about British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's order that Huawei equipment be purged by the end of 2027, Pompeo said "faster is always better" in terms of getting Huawei out of telecom infrastructure.

The United States contends Huawei is a security risk because of its links to the Chinese government. Beijing rejects that assertion, saying the United States is just trying to get rid of a commercial rival.