FACE MASKS & COVID-19 PREVENTION FOR EMPLOYERS

As an employer, it is your goal to keep your employees safe and healthy. The use of face masks by your employees can help to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the risk of an outbreak in your facility. If your employees came to work but were not aware that they were infected with COVID-19, the risk of COVID-19 spread in your facility would be reduced if those employees wore a face mask.

The CDC recommends that everyone - sick or healthy - wear a cloth face mask in places where 6-feet social distancing is difficult to maintain in an effort to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. Studies show that people can spread COVID-19 even if they don't have symptoms (asymptomatic) or before they have symptoms (presymptomatic).

How do face coverings/masks work?
Cloth face coverings prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing, or coughing. If everyone wears a cloth face covering when out in public, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 can be reduced for the community.

Wearing a cloth face covering can protect others around you. Face coverings worn by others protect you from getting the virus them if they are carriers. Masks also function as an important visual cue. They serve as a reminder to others to keep a 6-foot distance. Remember that a mask should be used in addition to other CDC & ODH recommended safety steps. It doesn't replace them.

A cloth face mask won't completely block the coronavirus, but it is an added layer of protection for you and the people around you when you use it along with regular handwashing and social distancing measures. You still need to limit your contact with other people, wash your hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds, and keep common surfaces clean.

What are other ways to protect my employees at work?
Wearing a mask alone is not effective in reducing transmission of COVID-19. Promote these recommendations to help slow the spread and minimize exposure to COVID-19.

- Whenever possible stay at least 6 feet from other people.
- Wash your hands often.
- Try not to touch your face.
- Frequently disinfect work areas and high-touch items in your workplace with disinfecting cleanser.
- Don’t share work materials or equipment, especially equipment used near the face.
- Don’t congregate with others in breakrooms or other areas.
- Avoid shared transportation if possible.
- Monitor yourself for COVID-19 symptoms and stay home if you experience any or otherwise feel sick.
How can I teach my employees to use a mask properly?

How to Wear a Face Mask
- Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Check to make sure the mask has no holes or broken/stretched straps.
- Secure the mask with ties behind your head. If it has loops, pull them behind your ears.
- Fit the mask around your nose and mouth, and under your chin.
- The mask should not be too tight over your face, but still feel comfortable.
- You should be able to breathe easily through it. Don't wear a mask if it is hard for you to breathe.
- Don't touch the mask while you are wearing it.

How to Remove Your Mask
- Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Take the mask off after you've worn it or if it gets damp.
- Try not to touch the front of the mask when you remove it. Instead, pull it off by the ear loops or untie bottom then top tie.
- Wash your hands with soap and water afterward.

How to Clean Your Mask
- Cloth face coverings should be washed regularly using hot water and a mild detergent.
- Dry in dryer or hang dry. Dry completely before wearing.
- Do not spray cleaners on the mask.

Things to Remember
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Do not wear the mask under the nose.
- Do not remove the mask when you are close to others (within 6 ft).
- Do not use a mask that is difficult to breathe through.
- Do not wear a mask that is wet or dirty.
- Do not share your mask with others. You should be the only person handling your covering.
# When should employees wear a face mask? Considerations for use in the workplace

## Masks Recommended

- When unable to maintain 6 feet between people
- Safety assessment conducted by your facility shows need for wearing a face mask
- When a barrier that would block sneezes and coughs or 6 foot spacing between employees is not possible
- In common areas such as break or lunch rooms
- When meeting or talking on the work floor and 6 foot distance cannot be maintained
- When cleaning offices, work stations, or other places within the agency
- For guests, vendors, or distributors visiting your agency
- When talking with someone within their office or at their doorway
- When moving throughout the building causes you to come within 6 feet of others
- When using a restroom that may be occupied by more than one person
- If an in-person group meeting is necessary and 6 foot spacing or barriers between people cannot be maintained
- When a medical team is responding or providing first aid

## Masks May Not Be Necessary

- When 6 feet or more is possible between people throughout the facility
- Safety assessment conducted by your facility reveals that, there is no need for a mask to be worn
- When an employee is alone in an office
- When an employee is isolated from others on the floor or is working alone
- If a law or regulation prohibits wearing a mask (example: OSHA provides direction on not wearing, state issued orders, etc.)
- When barriers are in place to separate people
- If wearing the mask is in violation of documented industry standards
- When an employee cannot wear the mask due to health reasons (example: diagnosed condition or trouble breathing)
- Wearing a face mask is in violation of the business’s documented safety policies
- There is a functional reason not to wear a mask (example: high temperatures, increased risk during job procedures or processes, etc.)
- When cleaning your personal office or workspace where no one else has had contact