

1. Why are face masks required in state facilities?

Cloth face coverings (or face masks) are recommended by the CDC and DHS Public Health as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the cloth face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice.

Returning more staff to the workforce, increased interaction with the public, the limited ability to ensure necessary space between employees at all times, and the increasing community transmission rates throughout Wisconsin all factored into the decision to require masks. Masks are a critical measure in slowing and preventing the spread of COVID-19 virus.

2. Do I need to wear a mask indoors even if I can physical distance at all times?

Yes, masks are required at all times to help control the spread of COVID-19 within the worksite and the communities in which we live.

3. If I already had COVID-19 or tested negative do I have to wear a mask?

Yes. Everyone must wear a face mask.

4. Where do I get a face mask?

Each agency has a supply of face masks available for employees. You may wear your own work appropriate mask if you prefer.

5. Is a space that has some open walls considered an outdoor space?

No, a space must be completely open on all sides to be outdoors. Opening windows does not create an outdoor space.

6. If I am alone in an enclosed office with a door do I need to wear a mask?

Yes, all employees are required to wear masks when in cubicles, offices, and common areas. Although you might be in a cubicle or office alone, if you are not wearing a mask you are depositing respiratory droplets when you talk, cough, sneeze, etc. This creates exposure to others, including the cleaning staff, who may later touch those same surfaces. Because other staff could enter your office before you have put your mask on or properly cleaned your office, masks are required in offices.

7. How do I wear a mask while I'm eating or drinking?

Employees are permitted to remove masks while eating and drinking but should wear them when retrieving food from the refrigerator, vending machine, reheating or otherwise preparing food.

8. I am not able to wear a mask due to a medical condition, mental health reason, or disability. What should I do?

Employees who are unable to wear a mask due to a medical or mental health condition, or disability, should contact their human resources representative (e.g., medical, or reasonable accommodation coordinator) to complete a reasonable accommodation request.

9. I am not able to wear a mask for medical condition, mental health reason, or disability. Do I need medical documentation about why I cannot wear a mask?

Not necessarily. Employees should talk to human resources and follow the reasonable accommodation process. Employees who need to provide medical documentation will be advised during that process.

10. I am not able to wear a mask based on a religious belief. What should I do?

Employees who are unable to wear a mask based on a religious belief should contact their human resources representative to discuss accommodation.

11. Can I wear a face shield instead of a face mask?

No. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), it is not known if face shields provide protection to others from the spray of respiratory particles. CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings.

However, a face shield may be permitted for staff who have difficulty breathing through a mask. In this instance, the employee should discuss their concerns with human resources.

12. Communication is an essential part of my job and I'm concerned that if I can't communicate clearly because of the face covering then I will not have effectively done my job. What should I do?

While all employees communicate on a regular basis, there are some instances when the effectiveness of the communication could be affected by wearing a mask. Employees may remove their mask in this instance when at least six feet from the other person and where other alternatives will not work, e.g. written communication, etc. Masks may also be removed to improve communication with others who rely on lip-reading, etc. for communication. Employees may also wish to consider a clear mask to assist with communication issues.

There may be other instances when a face mask may impede in one's ability to effectively do one's job. If you have such concerns, we encourage you to consult with your supervisor or human resources.

13. My goggles or glasses fog up when I wear a mask. What can I do?

[Here are some tips.](#)

14. What do I do if I see someone not wearing a mask, even though they should be?

Nothing. Some people have conditions or circumstances that would make wearing a cloth face covering difficult or dangerous. Just wear your mask and stay six feet away. If you remain concerned, you can talk to your supervisor or human resources.

15. Are there any other exceptions to the mask requirement?

Employees who work in a setting where cloth face coverings may increase the risk of [heat-related illness](#) or cause safety concerns due to introduction of a hazard (for instance, straps getting caught in equipment) may consult with an occupational safety and health professional to determine the appropriate face covering for their setting.

16. My job is indoors and outdoors, what should I do?

Employees are required to wear masks when indoors but may remove the mask when outdoors and when social distancing is possible.

17. If I participate in the state's van pool (ride share), do I need to wear a mask while in the vehicle?

Yes, you must wear a mask.

18. If a member of the public is not wearing a mask, can I deny them service?

No, although members of the public are encouraged to wear a mask, the State will not deny service for this reason. Members of the public should follow their local health department's guidance regarding the use of masks. Part of the reason to require employees to wear masks is to ensure the employee's personal protection. Masks will be available to members of the public doing business with the State.