



Employee COVID-19 Face Covering Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides general information on how City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) employees can safely use face coverings when they will be in contact with other people in public or in our workspaces. It is important to note that face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing and frequent handwashing.

Our best individual and collective defense against COVID-19 is to wash our hands frequently, avoid touching our eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, avoid being around people who are ill, and practice social distancing. Face coverings are not a replacement for these evidence-based strategies for slowing the spread of disease; they are an additional tool that can protect others from possible exposure to respiratory droplets that come from our mouth when we talk, sneeze or cough.

Cloth face coverings are not intended for use by those whose work requires close contact with people who are ill. Additionally, cloth face coverings are not a substitute for the required safety respirator specified if specified for your position or task. Employees should always wear the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when performing specific jobs. Finally, cloth face coverings are also not intended for someone who has trouble breathing, is incapacitated or is otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

IS A FACE COVER REQUIRED WHILE WORKING?

CBJ employees must follow the CBJ [workplace guidelines](#) regarding social distancing. CBJ employees should maintain 6-feet between themselves and any coworker or member of the public when possible. If an employee is unable to perform her/his job duties while maintaining a 6-foot distance from another person, then she/he must wear a face covering. Employees must wear face covering while in communal areas (e.g. break rooms, hallways), except when eating. When eating, 6-foot distancing should be maintained.

Some employees may be required to wear face coverings if their jobs require them to regularly interact with the public and where they do not have any other barrier for protection and cannot safely practice social distancing measures. Department directors shall be responsible for determining which positions are required to wear facial coverings and any other guidelines regarding the requirement. The CBJ shall provide a face covering to employees who are required to wear one to perform their job duties, if they do not have their own preferred and acceptable face covering. If an employee is unsure of whether they are required to wear a face

covering, or unsure if their preferred personal facial covering is acceptable, they should contact their department director.

WHY WEAR A CLOTH FACE COVER?

COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice (e.g., while shouting, chanting, or singing). These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies show that a significant portion of individuals with COVID-19 lack symptoms (are “asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (are “pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Alaska Division of Public Health recommend that people wear face coverings in public settings when around people outside of their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. The CBJ has applied this recommendation to employees while at work or at a worksite.

HOW WELL DO CLOTH FACE COVERINGS WORK TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19?

According to the CDC, there is limited, but positive, evidence to suggest that use of cloth face coverings during a pandemic could help reduce disease transmission. Their primary role is reducing the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes, including someone who has COVID-19 but feels well. Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing, washing hands and staying home when ill, but they may be helpful when combined with these primary interventions. When you use a cloth face covering, it is important to keep your nose and mouth covered. Lowering the covering from your nose and mouth while talking defeats the purpose of wearing the face covering since you can spread virus while talking.

WHY SHOULD I COVER MY FACE NOW, WHEN A FACE COVERING WAS NOT RECOMMENDED BEFORE?

The face covering was not previously recommended for the workforce for protection from getting COVID-19. We are learning that individuals may be contagious and spread COVID-19 without their knowledge, even if they do not have symptoms. The most recent information suggests that a face cover likely protects others from infection because wearing a face cover may help prevent the spread of droplets that might be infectious.

WHAT ARE MY FACE COVERING OPTIONS?

Acceptable, face covering options for CBJ employees include:

- Face coverings available to the public on the general market
- Bandana or scarf made of tightly woven fabric
- Neck gaiter or homemade face covering
- Tightly woven fabric, such as cotton T-shirts and some types of towels

If you do not own a cloth face covering that can be worn at work, the CBJ will provide one.

HOW TO WEAR A CLOTH FACE COVERING.

Cloth face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

CAN I USE AN N95 RESPIRATOR INSTEAD?

Purchasing a respirator intended for the healthcare setting and health workers is strongly discouraged. Medical respirators are worn for protection by healthcare staff, first responders and those workers who provide care to a person who might have COVID-19 or other communicable diseases. Additionally, using an N95 respirator requires additional training and testing for safe use and to be compliant with Occupational Safety and Health regulations.

HOW SHOULD I CARE FOR A CLOTH FACE COVERING?

It's a good idea to wash your cloth face covering frequently, ideally daily. Have a bag or container to store cloth face coverings until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. Bleach is not recommended as it may break down the fibers of the cloth used in the mask. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.

Discard cloth face coverings that:

- No longer cover the nose and mouth
- Have stretched out or damaged ties or straps
- Cannot stay on the face
- Have holes or tears in the fabric

WHAT IF I HAVE A MEDICAL CONDITION THAT PREVENTS ME FROM WEARING A MASK?

An employee who may have a medical condition that would prohibit them from wearing a mask at the workplace should contact Human Resources about the process to request an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).