

City of Burlington Face Covering Policy in Response to COVID 19

I. Applicability

All City employees and guests of City employees on City property, **indoors and outdoors**, must follow this policy to help to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This policy requires the use of reusable cloth face coverings or disposable surgical masks (see types below) related to the spread of COVID-19 virus, and does not replace other departmental policies regarding the use of PPE equipment. Note that this policy applies to all Burlington City employees except the Burlington Fire Department, which has a separate policy due to the unique nature of that department's operations.

II. The Use of Face Coverings for all City of Burlington Employees

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Vermont Department of Health (VDH) recommend, and the Governor of Vermont has mandated, the use of face coverings as one tool in community efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. The virus can easily pass between people interacting in close proximity by speaking, coughing, or sneezing, even if the people have no symptoms. Face coverings can help slow the spread of the virus. They are intended to reduce the likelihood that a wearer will effectively transmit the virus to others, but may also help reduce the likelihood that the wearer gets sick, or the severity of the disease if they do.

The use of a face covering does not replace the need for:

- regular hand washing,
- maintaining social distancing, and
- staying home if you are sick.

It is **critical** that everyone continue to practice all of these measures as well.

The City of Burlington requires the use of face coverings by all City Employees while at work, and recommends that you wear one whenever you cannot keep at least 6 feet of distance from others outside of your household.

When multiple employees share an office or use an indoor common space with others, they must be masked, even if they are more than 6 feet away because the virus particles do not scatter as well indoors as they do outside.

To satisfy the requirements of this policy, a reusable cloth face covering must create a barrier over the mouth and nose with no obvious gaps around the sides. A facial covering comprised of two or more layers of tightly woven fabric is strongly recommended.

The City has provided a cloth face covering to every City employee. If an employee needs another, contact the City Safety Manager or Human Resources Department.

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III. Types of Masks and Face Coverings

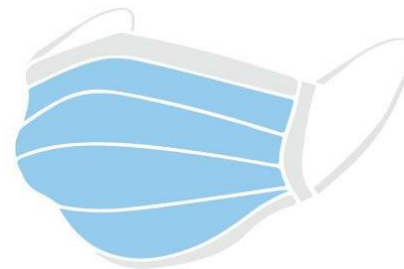
The following types of masks and face coverings are listed in decreasing order of the protection provided: *(images from the CDC, Costco.com and Amazon.com)*

- An N95/ Respirator Mask is a respiratory protective device designed to protect the wearer through the efficient filtration of airborne particles -filtering up to 95 % of very small particles (.3 micron) – and viruses. N95 masks are specifically fitted to the wearer to maintain a tight seal around the mouth and nose and provide among the highest level of protection. Certain versions with a plastic valve at the center, which makes the mask easier to exhale through, are intended for industrial workers, offer protection only to the wearer, and do not meet the requirements of this COVID-related policy.

N95 masks are intended for use by medical professionals and those who come into very close contact with a potentially infected person. The use of N95s may also be required by VOSHA or City workplace safety protocols in specific work tasks and settings where exposure to particulates or other biological or chemical agents may occur, such as where fine particles are created as a result of grinding, sawing, painting, and other similar activities. If you have a question about whether or not you should be wearing an N95 respirator for any task, please contact the City's Safety Manager, your supervisor, or your HR manager. However, even a properly fitted N95 respirator does not completely eliminate the risk of illness from COVID.

In situations where an N95 face mask is not required by VOSHA or other City workplace safety protocols, **reusable or disposable face coverings** should be worn to limit the impact on the supply of N95 face masks and to ensure they are available for emergency personnel and others who are required to wear them.

- A Surgical Mask is a loose-fitting, fluid-resistant disposable device commonly used by medical professionals that creates a physical barrier over the mouth and nose. If worn properly, a surgical mask is meant to help block large-particle droplets, splashes, sprays, or splatter that may contain germs (viruses and bacteria) from reaching the mouth and nose. Surgical masks may also help reduce exposure to the wearer's saliva and respiratory secretions. A surgical mask, by design, does not filter or block very small particles in the air that may be transmitted by coughs and does not provide complete protection because of the loose fit between the surface of the mask and your face. **A disposable surgical mask covering both the mouth and nose satisfies the requirements of this policy.**



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- A Cloth Face Covering is a reusable and often homemade device, preferably made from 2 or more layers of tightly woven fabric that creates a barrier over the mouth and nose with no obvious gaps around the sides. These face covering may also include some form of disposable filter that may provide additional benefit. The use of cloth face coverings by the general public to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus is now **strongly** recommended by the CDC and VDH. **A reusable cloth face covering made from 2 or more layers of tightly woven fabric that covers both the mouth and nose satisfies the requirements of this policy.**



A note about gaiters: The CDC does not currently recommend the use of gaiters as their effectiveness at reducing the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus remains unknown at this time. To satisfy the requirements of this policy, a reusable cloth face covering must be made and worn in such a way that it creates a barrier over the mouth and nose with no obvious gaps around the sides and preferably is comprised of two or more layers of tightly woven fabric.

- Face Shields are devices made of ridged or flexible transparent plastic attached to a headpiece and worn in front of the face, providing protection to the eyes in addition to the mouth and nose. Face shields are a common form of PPE found in health care and industrial settings, and are to be used in combination with a surgical or N95 face mask for those working in close-contact with suspected infectious patients or when conducting procedures where aerosols may be produced. Their effectiveness at reducing the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus remains unknown at this time, and therefore they are not recommended by the CDC to be used on their own because of the large gaps between the shield and the face. **Wearing a face shield alone is therefore not sufficient to meet the requirements of this policy.** In order to satisfy the requirements of this policy, face shields must be worn in combination with a reusable cloth face covering or disposable surgical mask as described above.



All City employees are required to wear either a reusable cloth face covering or disposable surgical mask over their nose and mouth when working and in the presence of others. When employees share or frequent a space for an extended period, masks should be used even if the employees are more than 6 feet apart. **Masks with exhalation valves or vents should NOT be worn.**

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IV. Additional Clarifications

- A face covering must be carried with an employee at all times while at work.
- Employees cannot share face coverings.
- Disposable masks must be thrown out at the end of each workday, and reusable face coverings must be washed daily.

Face coverings **must** be worn:

- When in the presence of others less than 6 feet apart, both indoors and outdoors.
- When working in shared office space, even if no other employee is within 6 feet.
- When working in, visiting, and passing through, any shared office or meeting space.
- When in any common or public space.
- When visiting someone in their private office.
- When riding in a vehicle with another person.

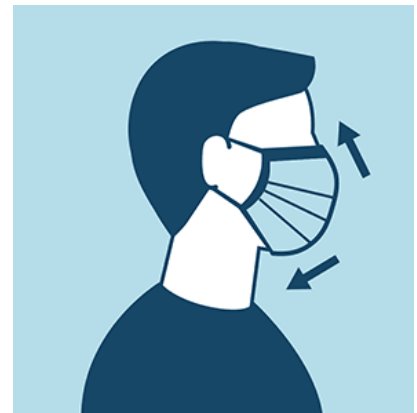
Face coverings do not have to be worn:

- When working more than 6 feet apart in an outdoor setting.
- When riding in a vehicle alone.
- When working in your office alone with the door shut.
- Employees working outdoors are not required to wear a mask if they are working alone and able to maintain a considerable and consistent distance from others (for example, lawn mowing alone).

V. How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings or Surgical Masks

Cloth face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- cover **both** the nose and mouth at all times
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered without damage or change to shape (or be disposed of and replaced daily)



VI. How to Safely Remove a Used Face Covering

Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, or mouth when removing their cloth face covering or surgical mask and wash hands immediately after removing.

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VII. Exceptions and Changes

Employees should contact their supervisor or Human Resources Manager if they cannot wear a mask for a medical reason or require a reasonable accommodation because of a disability or religious belief. Any exceptions must be approved through the Safety Manager and Human Resources.

This policy is subject to change at any time and is informed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and VDH guidelines. All changes will be communicated to all employees.

The first version of this policy was put into effect on April 22, 2020. An updated version was released on October 23, 2020.

VIII. Additional Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-faq.html>

<https://www.newamericansinvermont.com/important-information>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-and-other-government-agencies>

https://www.osha.gov/video/respiratory_protection/voluntaryuse.html

<https://medical.mit.edu/covid-19-updates/2020/08/how-do-i-choose-cloth-face-mask>