



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON COVID-19 FACE COVERING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to help ensure the health and safety of the University of Washington campus community and the public, face coverings are required to be worn on site at the University of Washington, regardless of vaccination status:

- Indoors when other people are present and in all public and common areas, such as lobbies, hallways, stairways, restrooms, elevators, and in shared vehicles
- Outdoors when keeping a six-foot distance from others may not be possible

This requirement is in accordance with Washington state workplace health and safety requirements and with the [Washington state public health orders for face coverings](#). This policy is in effect until otherwise communicated.

While keeping a physical distance of at least six feet from other people, practicing good hygiene measures (e.g., frequent hand washing, avoiding touching the face, covering coughs and sneezes), and staying home when ill are the best known protections against COVID-19, wearing a face covering that covers the nose and mouth can help protect others.

For the purposes of this policy, a face covering must:

- Fit snugly against the sides of the face
- Completely cover the nose and mouth
- Be secured with ties, ear loops, elastic bands, or other equally effective method
- Include at least two layers of material
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be capable of being laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape (if made with cloth or fabric)
- Be free of holes, tears or valves that have the potential to release respiratory droplets

2. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to **all University personnel, students, contractors, vendors, tenants, customers and visitors**, on site at a University location, including campus residence halls, unless specifically exempted below.

For the purposes of this policy, "University personnel" includes:



- Faculty, librarians and other academic personnel, students who work on site at a University work location, staff including contract-covered, classified non-union, temporary hourly, and professional staff, Hall Health physicians, and Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) contract employees.
- Individuals who have a contingent worker relationship with the UW, stipend recipients, and others who work on site at a University location, but are not employees of the University.

3. EXEMPTIONS

UW Medicine:

UW Medicine employees and visitors to UW medical centers are required to wear face coverings and personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with [UW Medicine policy](#).

Independent work spaces, outdoors, private residential units:

Face coverings are *not* required when:

- Working or spending time alone in a personal office or workspace with the door closed
- Working or spending time outdoors (e.g., walking, exercising) and at least a six-foot distance can be maintained
- Operating a single occupancy vehicle
- Inside an assigned on-campus residential unit unless a visitor is present.
- Actively eating or drinking; a six-foot physical distance between people is required when eating and drinking.

Job-specific PPE requirements:

Face coverings do not replace required job-specific PPE, such as medical/procedure masks, face shields or respirators. See the [Workplace COVID-19 Risk Level and Selection of Personal Protective Equipment](#) guidance for job-specific PPE requirements.

Infants and Toddlers:

Infants and toddlers under age two (2) should never wear cloth face coverings due to the risk of suffocation. Children ages two to four (2-4), with the assistance and close supervision of an adult, are strongly recommended to wear face coverings in settings where it is likely that a distance of at least six feet cannot be maintained from non-household members and those at high risk for more serious illness. All children aged five (5) years and older should wear a face covering unless medically directed to do otherwise.



4. MEDICAL OR HEALTH RISK ACCOMMODATIONS

Individuals with the following medical conditions or health risks may request an accommodation to this policy:

- A medical professional has advised that wearing a face covering may pose a health risk to the person wearing the covering or impair their breathing.
- A person has a medical condition, mental health condition, developmental or cognitive condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing, who are unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
- Wearing a face covering would create a safety risk to the person as determined by local, state, or federal regulators, or workplace safety guidelines.
- The person is deaf or hard of hearing and uses facial and mouth movements as part of communication.

For University personnel requesting a medical or health risk accommodation, determination of the accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis with the unit human resources representatives in coordination with the Disability Services Office (DSO) and the Environmental Health & Safety Department (EH&S). Personnel may be required to provide documentation to substantiate their need for an accommodation. An accommodation may not include allowing someone to not wear a face covering where it is required.

For students registered with Disability Resource for Students (DRS), determination of a medical or health risk accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with DRS. All other students requesting a medical or health-risk accommodation for instructional or campus activities, determination of the accommodation should be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the faculty member, administrator or staff member responsible for the instructional or campus activity prior to engaging DRS.

Examples of an accommodation may include, but are not limited to, allowing the student to take a course remotely, working with an advisor to find an alternative course option, or holding an event outside with appropriate distancing. An accommodation may not include allowing a student to not wear a face covering where it is required. Students do not need to provide documentation to substantiate their need for an accommodation, but students who cannot comply with this policy are strongly encouraged to reach out to faculty and staff well in advance of the course or event, and choose courses and activities that allow remote participation whenever possible.



UW retail functions and businesses servicing university personnel, students, patrons or members of the public (e.g., museums, UW Facilities Surplus Store, food establishments, University Bookstore) are encouraged to provide an accommodation (e.g., curbside pickup) for customers unable to safely wear a face covering as applicable to their operations.

5. UNIVERSITY UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the [University's COVID-19 Prevention Plan](#), units are required to [conduct an assessment to determine the required PPE](#) for their personnel. Units are required to provide all personnel working on site at a University work location with face coverings and/or job-required PPE and replace them when necessary. Unless personnel have specific, job-required PPE, units must distribute two cloth face coverings to personnel who are required to come to campus for work-related use. Personnel are responsible for laundering their University-issued reusable cloth face coverings and remembering to bring them to work. Personnel may also use a personally purchased alternative face covering as appropriate.

Personnel must be trained on the proper use, care, storage and disposal of face coverings and PPE. University units should refer to the [EH&S Guidance on Facemask Use for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19](#) for training personnel on the selection, care and use of face coverings and facemasks. Units can also refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance with regard to [type and fit](#), [wearing](#) and [washing](#) face coverings.

Units must communicate and enforce these requirements to all personnel working on site at a University work location and ensure all personnel are trained on the [University's COVID-19 Prevention Plan](#).

6. POLICY ENFORCEMENT

In the Workplace:

Personnel are expected to comply with the face covering requirement as a condition of employment, as well as for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues, and the UW community. Units are required to ensure all of their personnel have a thorough understanding of the requirements outlined in this policy. Personnel who do not comply should be reminded of the policy by their supervisor and provided additional education and training as needed.

If, after additional education and training, personnel refuse to comply, contact your unit human resources (HR) representative to initiate the appropriate corrective action or standard of conduct process. If unit human resources representatives require assistance,



they should contact their HR consultant or academic human resources (AHR) business partner.

If personnel state they are unable to wear a mask due to a health condition, refer the individual to the [formal accommodation request process](#). An accommodation will not include allowing someone to not wear a face covering where it is required.

University personnel with concerns that other personnel are not complying should speak with their supervisor, or report it to [EH&S](#).

Students:

Students are required to follow the face covering requirements at all times when on campus. If a student is without a face covering, in accordance with this policy, begin with a polite verbal request for compliance to educate and persuade the student to wear a face covering. If a student refuses to comply with the policy, the state regulations require the student to be sent home (on or off-campus residence). Student Conducts offices are available for consultations on potential violations of student conduct if needed. Students do not need to wear a face covering when inside a private on-campus residential unit; however, face coverings are required in common areas of residence halls.

University personnel with concerns that a student or group of students are not complying with this policy should speak with their supervisor, a representative of the academic unit, or report it to [EH&S](#).

Members of the public, customers and visitors on campus:

The University of Washington is committed to maintaining a respectful, productive, inclusive, and equitable workplace, and discrimination and other conduct that is inconsistent with our values will not be tolerated. Consistent with [Washington state's public health order for face coverings](#), members of the public, customers and visitors to the University are required to wear face coverings when entering a University facility and receiving service. If a member of the public, customer or visitor is not wearing a face covering, the following steps are to be taken:

- Begin with a polite verbal request for compliance to educate and persuade the individual to wear a face covering. University personnel should ask the individual to wear a mask or face covering, or have a supply of disposable facemasks to offer individuals who do not have one. [Signs](#) indicating the face covering requirement for all who enter should be clearly posted at all entrances and on websites when possible.



- If, following a polite verbal request, the individual continues to decline to wear a face covering or facemask, personnel should notify the site manager to assist the customer with determining if accommodations, such as curbside pickup, can be made.
- If the individual refuses to wear a face covering and does not indicate a medical condition or disability that prevents them from wearing a face covering, they should be politely informed that they are not permitted to enter and be asked to leave. Personnel should not attempt to physically block an individual or physically remove them from the space and should avoid confrontation, but should not provide service. Law enforcement (e.g., University of Washington Police Department or local law enforcement agency) may be called for help as a last resort.

7. RESOURCES

- [WA State Workplace and Public Health Orders for Face Coverings](#)
- [WA State Labor & Industries Requirements for COVID-19 Prevention in the Workplace](#)
- [University of Washington COVID-19 Prevention Plan](#)
- [EH&S Workplace COVID-19 Risk Level and Selection of Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- [EH&S Guidance on Facemask Use for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19](#)