



FACEMASK FOCUS SHEET

Wearing a facemask or face covering can help you protect yourself and others from getting and spreading COVID-19. Face coverings are designed to contain your respiratory droplets and airborne particles. They also provide you some protection from particles exhaled by other people.

WHEN AM I REQUIRED TO WEAR A FACE COVERING AT THE UW?

Face coverings are required indoors, regardless of vaccination status, when other people are present, and in all public and common areas, such as lobbies, hallways, stairways, restrooms, elevators, and in shared vehicles.

Face coverings are required outdoors at an event with 500 or more attendees.

Face coverings are strongly recommended outdoors, regardless of vaccination status, in crowded settings and places where it may be difficult to maintain distance from other people.

Refer to the [Face Covering Requirements](#) webpage for additional requirements and FAQs.

WHEN CAN I REMOVE MY FACE COVERING AT THE UW?

It is okay to remove your face covering when;

- Working or spending time alone in a personal office or workspace with the door closed
- Operating a vehicle with no passengers
- Inside an assigned on-campus residential unit
- Actively [eating or drinking](#) in appropriate places
- Any party to a communication is deaf or hard of hearing and not wearing a face covering is essential to communication

Read the full list on the [Face Covering Requirements](#) webpage.

WHAT TYPE OF FACE COVERING SHOULD I WEAR?

A face covering will protect you and others, and meets state requirements when it:

- **Fits snugly** against the sides of the face
- Completely **covers the nose and mouth**
- Can be **secured** with ties, ear loops, elastic bands or other equally effective method
- Has at least **two layers of material**
- Has a **nose wire** to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask (recommended)
- Allows you to **breathe** without restriction
- Is capable of being **laundered** (if made of cloth)
- Is free of **holes, tears or valves** that could release droplets

A face covering may also be a mask that provides a higher level of protection than a cloth face covering, such as a medical procedure/surgical mask, a KN95 mask, or an N95 mask.

*Cloth face coverings do **not** replace job-specific requirements for use of personal protective equipment (PPE).*

These do *not* provide adequate protection and do *not* meet state requirements:

- Bandanas
- Neck gators
- Face coverings with holes, tears or openings
- Respirator with an exhalation valve
- Face shield (when a facemask is *not* also worn)

See the next page for information on how to wear your face covering correctly.

DO choose masks that



Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric



Completely cover your nose and mouth



Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps

DO NOT choose masks that



Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example, vinyl



Have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape

How NOT to wear a mask



Around your neck



On your forehead



Under your nose



Only on your nose



On your chin



Dangling from one ear



On your arm

Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov)

MORE INFORMATION

[Differences between Face Coverings, Facemasks and Respirators](https://www.ehs.washington.edu) (www.ehs.washington.edu)

[Guidance on Facemask Use](https://www.ehs.washington.edu) (www.ehs.washington.edu)

[CDC Your Guide to Masks](https://www.cdc.gov) (www.cdc.gov)

[Washington State Department of Health Face coverings and Masks](https://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov)

[Public Health — Seattle & King County Masks Protect You and Me](https://kingcounty.gov/masks) (kingcounty.gov/masks)

Contact EH&S at ehsdept@uw.edu or 206.543.7262 with questions.