



Employee Face Covering Requirement Policy

Approved: *[Signature]*

Effective Date: August 4, 2021

OVERVIEW	
Objective	To align our face mask use requirements with the updated Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.
Policy Statement	<p>It is the Policy of the City of Duluth to follow CDC guidance regarding face covering recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic. City employees are expected to adhere to these reasonable and necessary safety requirements in an effort to promote and maintain a safe working environment and prevent, as much as possible, the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.</p> <p>Employees shall possess and wear a face covering whenever they are indoors.</p>
Scope	This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, interns, and vendors working at a City worksite and/or while in the performance of their responsibilities or obligations. This Policy also applies to public and elected officials of the City of Duluth as well as members of Boards and Commissions while in the performance of their responsibilities or obligations. This Policy does <u>not</u> supersede department-specific or job-specific policies. In the case of conflicting policies or directives, the more protective policy or directive applies.
Background	<p>The City is following CDC guidance based on scientific evidence that face coverings help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individuals can be contagious before the onset of symptoms. Individuals may be contagious and not know it. By covering their nose and mouth, individuals can help limit the spread of COVID-19. 2. Individuals touch their faces less when their faces are covered. Touching one's face after touching something contaminated with COVID-19 increases the chance of COVID-19 infection.
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supersedes: Cloth Face Mask Policy (04/15/2020); Face Mask Policy (07/15/2020); Employee Face Covering Requirement Policy (9/01/2020)

RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS**I. FACE COVERINGS**

- a. Face coverings for purposes of this Policy means a surgical mask or a cloth face covering that cover the employee's nose and mouth. Departments shall provide masks or face coverings to employees, and employees may also utilize their own personal face masks that comply with the following requirements:
 - i. Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face;
 - ii. Fully covers the employee's nose and mouth;
 - iii. Include multiple layers of fabric, if cloth face coverings are used; and
 - iv. Are able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage or change to its shape (cloth only).
- b. **Face coverings, including surgical masks and N95 respirators, do not completely prevent employees from contracting or transmitting COVID-19. Face coverings generally reduce, but do not eliminate, COVID-19 exposure. Face coverings should not be used to take the place of respiratory Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is indicated for other work-related respiratory hazards (e.g., hazardous atmospheres, chlorine/chemical fumes, silica, asbestos, etc.).**

II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- a. Employees shall be required to wear a face covering that covers their mouth and nose while in the workplace and/or at the worksite. This includes entering and exiting the workplace or worksite and during breaks. This also includes wearing a face covering when entering places where offsite services are being performed.
- b. In workplace settings where employees are working alone in an open or segregated space (i.e., cubicles with walls, private offices, etc.), employees may remove their masks. However, they shall keep them readily available for use when anyone enters their space.
- c. For employees working in congregate settings or open spaces where other people are in the same area (i.e., in cubicles without walls, customer service counters, shared offices, warehouses, or other areas open to other employees or the public, or similar settings), the face covering requirement shall be in effect at all times.
- d. Employees interacting with members of the public, employees shall wear face coverings at all times.
- e. Face coverings must comply with other applicable City and/or Department policies (i.e., Employee Conduct, Workplace Violence and Harassment, Uniform, etc.). Supervisors have the right to determine what masks are deemed inappropriate and may require employees to replace face coverings at any time.
- f. Employees operating a City vehicle or a personal vehicle on City business shall wear a face covering when other employees or passengers are in those vehicles.
- g. Employees do not need to wear a mask or face covering in the following situations:
 - i. When eating and drinking while maintaining six-foot distancing;
 - ii. When employees work alone in a private office, cubicle with walls, or other isolated work area so long as they wear face coverings when coworkers are working in the same space or if someone enters their office or cubicle;
 - iii. When alone in a City vehicle that is permanently assigned to the employee and not shared with other employees/passengers;
 - iv. When interacting with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing who relies on lip reading to communicate;
 - v. When the employee's department determines that wearing a face covering while working would create a safety risk to the employee or when a department-specific exemption has been created for specific activities or point in time. Please note that departments creating such exemptions need to document the circumstances as they arise and the positions affected.

III. ENFORCEMENT

Departmental managers and supervisors are responsible to assist with the communication and education of this Policy and must enforce the face covering requirements in accordance with this Policy. An employee who fails to comply with the face covering requirements will receive notice of the requirement, and will be given an immediate opportunity to comply. If the employee does not immediately comply, the employee may be sent home on vacation or accrued leave, other than sick leave, and issued a written warning. If the employee does not comply with the requirement a second time, the City will proceed with further disciplinary action. Employees may refer complaints or concerns regarding compliance with this Policy to:

Amber Haglund-Pagel, Safety & Training Officer
ahaglundpagel@duluthmn.gov 218-730-5208

Steve Koslucher, PWU Safety Coordinator
skoslucher@duluthmn.gov 218-730-4007

IV. DISABILITY RELATED ACCOMMODATIONS

The City recognizes that some employees may not be able to wear a face mask due to medical reasons. If an employee believes they are unable to comply with the face covering requirement due to a medical reason, the employee may request an accommodation by contacting Safety & Training Officer Amber Haglund-Pagel at 218-730-5208 or ahaglundpagel@duluthmn.gov and providing a medical note supporting the need for an accommodation. Please note that employees may be sent home on sick leave during the interactive reasonable accommodation process, unless the department determines telecommuting is available and appropriate instead of sick leave.

V. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS

The City reasonably accommodates employees' religious observances, practices, and beliefs (including physical appearance or manner of dress with the tenets of their religion). However, the City will not be able to accommodate employees' religious observances, practices, and beliefs if the accommodation would cause an undue hardship to the employer. Compromising the safety of the employee or others may be considered an undue hardship. If an employee is unable to comply with the Face Covering Requirement Policy due to religious beliefs, the employee must immediately notify Safety & Training Officer Amber Haglund-Pagel at 218-730-5208 or ahaglundpagel@duluthmn.gov. The City will engage the employee in an interactive process to determine what the options are and whether there is reasonable accommodation that can be provided.

VI. OBTAINING A CLOTH OR DISPOSABLE FACE MASK

- a. Cloth or disposable face masks have been distributed to worksites for employee use. If more are needed, they can be requested from the Safety and Training Officer or the Public Works & Utilities Safety Coordinator:

Amber Haglund-Pagel, Safety & Training Officer
ahaglundpagel@duluthmn.gov 218-730-5208

Steve Koslucher, PWU Safety Coordinator
skoslucher@duluthmn.gov 218-730-4007

If you make a cloth face mask, follow the CDC guidelines on Homemade Cloth Face Coverings or the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Guidance on Alternative Facemasks.

VII. HOW TO WEAR A FACE COVERING**a. Face coverings should—**

- fit snugly but comfortably against the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction

b. How to Remove a Face Covering

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

**VIII. CARING AND DISPOSAL OF FACE COVERINGS**

Surgical masks should be stored in paper bags for use on successive days. When putting on the mask, make sure the nose piece is fitted to your nose and the surgical mask is well centered. If you must adjust the mask, sanitize hands and only touch the outside of the surgical mask. When removing the mask, sanitize your hands and follow protocols provided for proper removal and storage. Please follow these steps:

1. Grabbing the straps in the back of the mask and the surgical mask in the front, in one motion pull away from your face.
2. Have an open grocery bag ready to place the surgical mask into.
3. Carefully place the surgical mask face up in the bag, with the straps out away from the mask.
4. Mark the date on the bag.
5. Do not reuse the mask until the third day after last use.

Please note that surgical masks may be worn until they are visibly soiled, torn, or have had splashes or sprays on them.

Cloth face coverings should be washed frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily. Employees should have a bag or bin to store cloth face coverings until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash or sanitize your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.

Employees shall 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