



# Cloth Face Mask Policy

Approved:

Effective Date: April 15, 2020

| OVERVIEW         |   |
|------------------|---|
| Objective        | To align our workplace protective recommendations with the updated Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines regarding the use of cloth face masks in public.  |
| Policy Statement | <p>This Policy allows employees to wear a cloth or similar mask indefinitely in the workplace during the COVID-19 health crisis. The use of cloth face masks is voluntary. However, the CDC recommends the use of simple cloth face masks to help slow the spread of the virus.</p> <p>The CDC recommends that employees wear cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.</p>  |
| Scope            | This Policy applies to all City employees and volunteers. 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 COVID-19 virus can spread between people interacting in proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. The intention of the recent CDC recommendation to wear masks or face coverings in public is to catch virus-containing droplets that a person might emit. Face masks protect other people around the wearer in the event that the wearer has the COVID-19 infection, but is unaware due to lack of symptoms.</p> <p>The following are typical signs or symptoms associated COVID-19 infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Chills</li> </ul> |

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

### I. GUIDELINES

- a. The use of cloth face masks at work is voluntary. Cloth face masks are not surgical masks or N95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for those providing direct patient care, as recommended by current CDC guidance. Cloth face masks do not have to be hospital grade but need to cover the nose and mouth, and may include items such as bandanas, scarves, or fabric masks.
- b. **Cloth face masks do not prevent employees from contracting or transmitting COVID-19. Surgical masks and N95 respirators do not prevent employees from contracting or transmitting COVID-19. Masks generally reduce, but do not eliminate exposure. Cloth face masks 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.).**
- c. If you choose to wear a cloth face mask, you must be able to perform the essential functions of your job, including clear communication. Cloth face masks must comply with other applicable City and/or Department policies (i.e., Employee Conduct, Workplace Violence and Harassment, Uniform). Supervisors have the right to determine what masks are deemed inappropriate and may require employees to replace cloth face masks at any time.

### II. OBTAINING A CLOTH FACE MASK

- a. If a mask is not required by your Department-specific policy, the City is not required to provide a mask or facial cloth covering. However, the City will make reasonable efforts to obtain masks and/or facial cloth coverings for all employees requesting them at no cost to the employee.

Informal coordination of resources for facial coverings may be set up through the City's Safety & Training Office, or independently within each work group. This includes both the donation of fabric masks, and requests for them.

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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.

#### b. 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

#### c. How to Remove a Cloth Facing Covering

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

