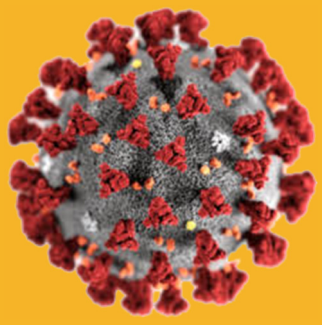
TEAMSTERS SAFETY & HEALTH COVID-19 Guidance



Mask And Respirators Used For The Prevention Of Covid-19

November 17, 2021

This fact sheet describes recommendations for wearing face coverings, masks, and respirators that may be used to protect yourself and others from exposure to and infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) at the workplace and in the community.

HOW CAN MASKS AND RESPIRATORS PROTECT YOU?

COVID-19 commonly spreads between people in close contact through respiratory droplets or small particles produced when an infected person coughs, talks, or breathes. *Droplets* can remain suspended in the air and travel distances beyond six feet. Indoor environments with poor ventilation increase the risk of transmission.

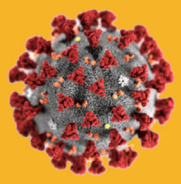
Tightly woven cloth face coverings and masks are designed to contain your respiratory droplets and particles. They also provide you with some protection from particles expelled by others.

NIOSH-certified respirators are designed to protect you from inhaling particulates, including particulates small enough to contain the virus that causes COVID-19. Tight fighting respirators can also function as source control. Doing so can prevent your respiratory droplets from spreading into the atmosphere around you so you do not expose others.

ARE MASKS THE ONLY MEASURES TO PROTECT YOU AND OTHERS?

For workplaces, in general, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends that employers rely on a layered approach to control hazards. A COVID-19 prevention program[1] should include several important steps to keep workers safe such as:

[1] https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework



- Telework and flexible schedules
- Engineering controls (especially ventilation)
- Administrative policies (e.g., vaccination policies)
- Masks and respirators
- Physical barriers (solid barriers at each fixed work location where employees are not separated from other people by at least 6 feet)
- Physical distancing (at least 6 feet apart when indoors), and
- Cleaning and disinfection: Follow standard practices for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and equipment in accordance with CDC guidelines.

For all workers[2], regardless of vaccination status, it is always a good practice to:

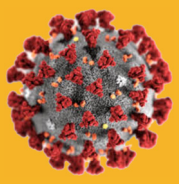
- Wear cloth face coverings[3], at a minimum, at all times when around coworkers or the general public. Cloth face coverings are *not* acceptable substitutes for respirators when a hazard assessment proves this level of protection is required.
- Surgical masks are not respirators and do not provide the same level of protection to workers as properly fitted respirators.
- Suppose a respirator, such as an N95 respirator or better, is needed for conducting work activities. In that case, that respirator should be used. The worker should use their cloth face covering when they are no longer in an area that requires respiratory protection (during breaks, socially distanced outdoors, or while commuting).
    - Suppose an employer requires the use of a respirator. In that case, the respirator must be used in the context of a comprehensive respiratory protection program that meets the requirements of OSHA's Respiratory Protection standard (29 CFR 1910.134), which includes medical exams, fit testing, and training.

WHO SHOULD WEAR A MASK?

People, including children older than 2, should wear a mask in public places if they are:

- Unvaccinated or Not fully vaccinated
- Fully vaccinated and in an area with 'substantial or high transmission.'
- Fully vaccinated and with weakened immune systems[4]
- In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings, BUT
    - In areas with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, consider wearing a mask in a crowded outdoor setting and for activities with 'close contact' with others who are not fully vaccinated.

[2] https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/control-prevention
[3] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html
[4] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html



WHY SHOULD THE FULLY VACCINATED WEAR MASK INDOORS?

The risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection, severe disease, and death is reduced for fully vaccinated people. However, since vaccines are not 100% effective at preventing infection, some fully vaccinated people will still get COVID-19 infection[5]. Fully vaccinated people who do become infected can transmit it to others. Therefore, this evidence has led the CDC to update their Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People[6] to reduce their risk of becoming infected with the Delta variant and potentially spreading it to others, including by:

- Wearing a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission[7];
- Choosing to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission, particularly by individuals who have a condition or is taking medications that weaken their immune system or have someone in their household who is at increased risk of severe disease or not fully vaccinated[8]; and
- Getting tested 3-5 days following known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and wearing a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until a negative test result.[2]

WHO SHOULD WEAR A MASK OUTDOORS?

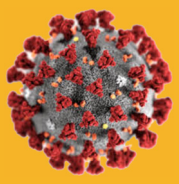
The risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in outdoor settings is low.

In general, fully vaccinated people do not need to wear a mask outdoors. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask:

- In areas with high numbers of COVID-19 cases.
- For activities with close contact with others who are not or not known whether fully vaccinated.
- If they or someone in their household is immunocompromised, at increased risk of severe disease[9], unvaccinated, or not fully vaccinated.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, OSHA generally recommends that employers encourage workers to wear cloth face coverings at work to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. However, workers who wear cloth face coverings in hot[10] and humid environments or while performing strenuous activities outdoors, such as those in agriculture, landscaping, construction, delivery services, and oil and gas operations, can find cloth face coverings to be uncomfortable and may in certain conditions, create an unintended health hazard by its use.

[5] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/fully-vaccinated-people.html
[6] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html
[7] https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view
[8] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html
[9] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html
[10] https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/covid-19-cloth-coverings-outdoor-heat.pdf



WHAT ARE THE MASKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR K- 12 SCHOOLS? [11]

The CDC guidance for COVID-19 prevention is that anyone two years or older who is not fully vaccinated should wear masks in indoor public spaces. For K-12 schools, CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status or transmission rates. The benefits of mask-wearing are well-established.

A vaccine for 12- to 17-year-olds is available, and a low-dose Pfizer vaccine for 5- to 11-year-olds has recently been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

WHAT ARE THE MASKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION?[12]

Wearing a mask over your nose and mouth is required on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and while indoors at U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. Travelers are not required to wear a mask in outdoor conveyance areas (like on open deck areas of a ferry or the uncovered top deck of a bus)[13].

HOW CAN YOU IMPROVE MASK PROTECTION?[14]

Wear a mask correctly and consistently for the best protection:

- Wear it properly (covering your nose and mouth).
- Always choose a well-fitting and comfortable mask or respirator
- Be sure to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on a mask.
- Do not touch the mask when wearing it. If you have to often touch/adjust your mask, it doesn't fit you properly, and you may need to find a different mask or make adjustments.

Masks work best when EVERYONE wears them. However, not all masks provide the same protection. Two important ways to make sure your mask works the best are described below:

- Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face. Gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges of the mask
- Pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others out. A mask with layers will stop more respiratory droplets from getting inside your mask or escaping from your mask if you are sick.

[11] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html#children
[12] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html
[13] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html
[14] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MASKS?

There are many types of masks that you can use to protect yourself and others from getting and spreading COVID-19. A brief description of different types of masks and some of the pros and cons of each are described below.

Cloth Masks[15]

Wear cloth masks with:

- A proper fit over your nose and mouth to prevent leak
- Multiple layers of tightly woven, breathable fabric
- Nose wire
- Fabric that blocks light when held up to a bright light source

Do NOT wear cloth masks with:

- Gaps around the sides of the face or nose
- Exhalation valves, vents, or other openings (see example below)
- Single-layer fabric or those made of thin fabric that doesn't block light

Disposable Masks

Disposable face masks are widely available. They are sometimes referred to as *surgical masks* or *medical procedure masks*.

Wear a disposable mask with:

- A proper fit over your nose and mouth to prevent leaks
- Multiple layers of non-woven material
- Nose wire

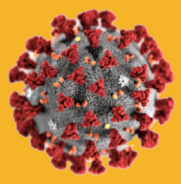
Do NOT wear disposable masks with:

- Gaps around the sides of the face or nose (see example)
- Wet or dirty material

TO HAVE A BETTER FIT AND EXTRA PROTECTION WITH CLOTH AND DISPOSABLE MASKS:

- Wear two masks (disposable mask underneath AND cloth mask on top).
- Combine either a cloth mask or disposable mask with a fitter or brace.

[15] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html



- Knot and tuck ear loops of a 3-ply mask where they join the edge of the mask
    - For disposable masks, fold and tuck the unneeded material under the edges. (See the following video[16])
- Use masks that attach behind the neck and head with either elastic bands or ties (instead of ear loops)

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Gaiters and Face Shields

- Wear a gaiter with two layers, or fold it to make two layers
- Not recommended: Evaluation of face shields is ongoing, but effectiveness is unknown at this time

People with Beards

- Certain types of facial hair, like beards, can make mask fitting difficult. Masks that fit well protect you better. To better fit, people with beards can shave their beards or trim their beards close to the face; otherwise, masks may fit loosely around the beard. However, people with beards should still wear a mask. Masks designed for beards are being evaluated, and information will be provided when it becomes available (beard and respirator use is discussed below).

HOW DO RESPIRATORS PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19?

Respirators are designed to reduce the wearer's exposure to small particle aerosols and large droplets, including the virus that causes COVID-19.

OSHA's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standard requires that a PPE hazard assessment be conducted to assess workplace hazards and that PPE, such as respiratory protection, be used when necessary. When an employer determines that a respirator is necessary to protect unvaccinated and otherwise at-risk workers from exposure to COVID-19 for their specific worksite and task, the employer must provide it in accordance with relevant mandatory OSHA standards[17] industry-specific guidance[18].

According to OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard,[19] when respirators are required in a workplace, they must be NIOSH-approved. Employers must have a respiratory protection program that includes medical evaluations, fit testing, and training for employees a hazard evaluation for proper respirator selection. Employers are responsible for establishing and maintaining a respiratory protection program and evaluating the program's effectiveness in protecting their employees.

A respiratory protection program must include "certain provisions for voluntary use when workers supply their respirators. There are times when PPE is not called for by OSHA standards or other industry-specific guidance. Still, some workers may have a legal right to PPE as a reasonable

[16] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzTAZDsNBe0
[17] https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/standards
[18] https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/guidance/industry
[19] https://www.osha.gov/respiratory-protection

accommodation under the ADA20 [Americans with Disabilities Act]. Employers are encouraged to proactively inform employees who have a legal right to PPE as a reasonable accommodation for their disability about how to make such a request. Other workers may want to use PPE if they are still concerned about their safety (e.g., if a family member is at higher risk for severe illness, they may want to wear a face shield in addition to a face covering as an added layer of protection). Encourage and support voluntary use of PPE in these circumstances and ensure the equipment is adequate to protect the worker.[21]"

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) approves many particulate 'filtering facepiece respirators[22]. The most widely available is an N95, but other types (N99, N100, P95, P99, P100, R95, R99, and R100) offer the same or better protection as an N95.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT AN N95:[23] [24]

- Filters up to 95% of particles in the air when approved by NIOSH and proper fit can be achieved
- Seals tightly to the face when fitted properly
- Since N95 respirators form a seal to the face, they may feel harder to breathe through than a cloth mask
- N95 respirators cannot be washed. They need to be discarded when they are dirty, damaged, or difficult to breathe through
- N95 respirators tend to be more expensive than masks

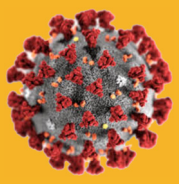
Wear an N95 with:

- Cup, flat fold, or duckbill shape
- Two straps that go around the head
- Formable wire nose bridge
- NIOSH has approved appropriate markings printed on the filter indicating the N95 respirator[25]

Do NOT wear an N95:

- If you have certain types of facial hair
- If it is a counterfeit[26] (fake) N95 respirator
- If hard to breathe
- If wet or dirty
- With a mask or second respirator

[20] https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws#D
[21] https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework
[22] https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/n95list1.html
[23] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html
[24] https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/UnderstandDifferenceInfographic-508.pdf
[25] https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/images/infographics/N95-Infographic-Mask-Labeling.jpg
[26] https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/usernotices/counterfeitResp.html



How to wear an N95:

- Individuals who want to use a respirator for personal use should follow the user instructions strictly.
- Fit testing (a process that uses specialized equipment) is best to determine if the respirator fits you. Even without appropriate testing, a well-fitting, properly worn respirator may provide more protection than a mask. However, a poorly fitting or improperly worn respirator or mask may reduce its intended benefit.
- NIOSH and OSHA have developed a flyer[27] and a video[28] demonstrating how to perform a user seal check and properly put on (don) and take off (doff) a respirator.

If an employee can trim their beard so that the beard does not come between their face and the respirator seal or interfere with respirator-valve function, then the use of a respirator would be acceptable provided the employee passed a proper fit test. Examples of acceptable beard trim can be found by visiting the following CDC webpage:

- https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2017/11/02/noshave/.

Parents and caregivers may have questions about NIOSH-approved respirators (such as N95s) for children.[29] Although respirators may be available in smaller sizes, they are typically designed to be used by adults in workplaces, and therefore have not been tested for general use in children.

More Information and Resources

- Your Guide to Masks
  www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html
- Masks Protect you & Me
  www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/masks-protect-you-and-me.html
- Improve How Your Mask Protects You
  www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html
- Three Key Factors Required for a Respirator to be Effective
  www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/KeyFactorsRequiedResp01042018-508.pdf

For concerns, questions, and information, contact the IBT Safety and Health Department at (202) 624-6960 or ibtsafety@teamster.org or visit: https://teamster.org/COVID-19

[27] https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA4015.pdf
[28] https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Tzpz5fko-fg
[29] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html