

Mandatory Face Covering Policy Guidelines

Your employer needs to work with the union on a written policy prior to unilaterally implementing their policy.

Your employer's policy will need to consider compliance with any orders at the federal, state, county, city, etc. levels, the USW has compiled a state by state reference sheet. You can download the list <..\Desktop\FAQ COVID19\A List of Statewide Orders as of May 26 2020.pdf>

Employers and the union will need to address such items as;

- Training on how to properly wear and care for cloth face coverings
- Where they are specifically required to be worn
- Medical condition accommodations
- Progressive discipline steps
- Ways to reduce fogging of eyewear
- Hazard identification. Ensure wearing a mask is not creating additional hazards.
- How many are issued to employees

We strongly suggest employers provide cloth face coverings at no cost to employees in different styles and fabrics. Workers may also want to use their own for fit and comfort reasons.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-foot social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. Simple cloth face coverings are to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. They are a source control, not personal protective equipment.

OSHA has released the following statement:

Using homemade masks or improvised mouth and nose covers only, as a last resort (i.e., when no respirators or facemasks are available). Improvised masks are not personal protective equipment and, ideally, should be used with a face shield to cover the front and sides of the face. When this measure is the only resort, refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html .

Some state and/or local governments are not only requiring employees to wear face coverings at work but are also requiring employers to provide the cloth masks.

CDC's Important Information About Your Cloth Face Coverings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/cloth-face-coverings-information.pdf>

CLOTH FACE COVERINGS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is consistently studying the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from recent studies that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others **before showing symptoms**. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in settings where other social distancing measures, like staying six feet apart, are difficult to maintain.

Understand, however, that cloth face coverings don’t do much to protect the wearer. The virus is sometimes carried by tiny particles that easily pass through cloth. But a cloth face covering does help protect other people if the wearer has the virus and doesn’t know it. A cloth face mask can catch the big droplets from coughs and sneezes. It also slows down the tiny particles, so they don’t project as far.

Cloth face coverings are only one part of a comprehensive plan for protecting people who have to be at work. For more information on such programs, go to the USW website, <https://www.usw.org/members/coronavirus-resources>

How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering

- Coverage area should include both your mouth and nose area
- Ensure it fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Secure covering with ties or ear loops
- Coverings should be designed to include multiple layers of fabric
- Once you have secured the mask to your face, make sure it allows for breathing without restriction

The CDC website, linked below, shows several ways to make a cloth face covering.

Sterilizing/Cleaning a Cloth Face Covering

Make sure the face coverings are able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to the shape. There has been a lot of false information released about cleaning cloth face coverings; including microwaving and sealing in a Ziplock bag. This could cause damage to the covering and might not even work. A washing machine or hand-washing with soap and hot water works well.

Please refer to the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> for additional information.