

COVID-19 Mask/Facial Coverings

CDC

While we battle with the COVID-19 pandemic, face masks/coverings are an important component in helping to stop the spread of this deadly virus. The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone in the general public wear a cloth mask in addition to continuing to follow social distancing guidelines when out in public.

ODH

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has developed the following FAQ with regards to cloth masks and face coverings in the workplace. Link:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/resources/general-resources/cloth-masks-or-face-coverings-in-the-workplace>

An effective cloth mask should cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of the face. The mask should include multiple layers of fabric and allow for unrestricted breathing.

Employees

According to Ohio's Stay Safe Ohio Order, libraries must require employees to wear a face mask/covering. If an employee objects to doing so for health, disability or religious reasons, then that should be examined on a case by case basis. However, face coverings are not required if the employee is advised not to because of health reasons, it is prohibited for a specific position by law or regulation, or a violation of a company's safety policy. When an employee is working alone in an assigned area, a face mask is not required. If any of these exceptions apply, written justification must be provided upon request.

Patrons

According to Ohio's Stay Safe Ohio Order, libraries are required to allow patrons to wear a face mask/covering. However, libraries do not have to require patrons to wear them although public health guidance recommends it to help protect employees. If you choose to require patrons to wear a mask/face covering under your Patron Code of Conduct and a patron objects to doing so for health/disability or religious reasons, then that should be examined on a case by case basis.

FDA Labeling Requirements

If a library plans to provide employees or patrons with face coverings, then it must make sure that those face coverings comply with FDA labeling requirements. Face coverings intended to prevent disease (including COVID-19) are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as medical devices and typically must be cleared prior to distribution to employees or customers. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, the FDA is relaxing these requirements under certain circumstances. In particular, the FDA has authorized the distribution of face masks where the accompanying labeling:

1. Accurately describes the product as a face mask or covering (as opposed to a “surgical mask” or “respirator”);
2. Includes a list of the body-contacting materials (i.e. cotton), which must not include any drugs or biologics;
3. Makes recommendations that would sufficiently reduce the risk of use, including recommendations against use:
 - a. In any surgical setting or where significant exposure to liquid, bodily or other hazardous fluids, may be expected;
 - b. In a clinical setting where the infection risk level through inhalation exposure is high; and
 - c. In the presence of a high intensity heat source or flammable gas; and
4. Does not suggest that the face mask is suitable for any use that would create an undue risk in light of the public health emergency, including by making express or implied claims related to:
 - a. Antimicrobial or antiviral protection or related uses; or
 - b. Infection prevention or reduction or related uses; or
 - c. Particulate filtration.