

Face Coverings Training and Guidance

August 10, 2020

Training

Why is wearing a face covering important?

- Wearing a face covering may prevent the person wearing the covering from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing, or coughing.
- If everyone wears a cloth face covering when out in public, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 can be reduced for the community.
- Since people can spread the virus before symptoms start, or even if people never have symptoms, wearing a cloth face covering can protect others around you. Face coverings worn by others protect you.

*Please note that the correct terminology is “face covering” and not “mask.” The cloth face coverings recommended are **not** surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.*

- It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. The [CDC does not recommend use of face shields](#) for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings.

Read

[Guide for Returning to the Workplace](#)

Pages 6-7. Section: **Face Coverings**

Watch

[Tips for wearing face mask coverings during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Guidance

Off-Campus Settings

- **Continue to provide online educational offering options whenever possible.** Continuing online access helps protect those vulnerable community members.
- The health and safety of staff, volunteers, council members, visitors, and participants are our top priorities. **If a person chooses to not abide by health and safety guidance**, consult the [Open for Iowa](#) document, Conversations about Personal Comfort and COVID-19 Safety Practices in the Workplace.
- **Include the following [statement](#) on registration forms and websites:**

COVID-19 Registration Statement (must be on registration forms)

We are prioritizing the health and safety of Iowans and are following the most current federal, state, local, and university COVID-19 guidelines. Visit [Open for Iowa](#) to learn our protocols to keep Iowans healthy and safe. Participants are strongly encouraged to wear a cloth face covering when in the presence of others and unable to maintain a six-foot physical distance.

Registration thank you messages (for CPM or other online thank you messages)

Thank you for registering for XXXXX. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is here for you – now and always. We take serving Iowans seriously, which is why we are prioritizing the health and safety of our community, participants, volunteers, and staff.

- *Please do not attend if you show any [symptoms as described by the Center for Disease Control](#).*
- *We strongly encourage you to wear a cloth face covering when in the presence of others and unable to maintain a six-foot distance.*
- *Please contact XXX if your registration plans have changed due to COVID-19 related situations.*

Please let us know if you have a question or concern. Together, we're building a #STRONGIOWA.

Face Coverings for Staff and Council Members

ISU Extension and Outreach state staff

- Beginning July 1, face coverings will be required on the ISU campus classrooms, offices, indoors and outdoors where physical distancing is not possible. This is an adjustment from the original face covering policy.
- This requirement applies to Iowa State University Extension and Outreach staff working in a professional capacity when physical distance cannot be maintained on campus.
- Off-campus, all faculty and staff who are able are expected to wear a cloth face covering when in the presence of others where physical distancing is not maintained consistent with [CDC guidance](#) and [university guidance](#). This expectation applies at all times when Iowa State University Extension and Outreach staff members are working in a professional capacity regardless of venue (e.g., in a county office, providing a program in an outside venue, etc.).
- The university is providing two cloth face coverings to all students, faculty, and staff who request them, free of charge. Campus units should reserve face coverings for their employees through [central stores](#). Disposable and cloth face coverings are available for purchase from the [Extension Store](#). Staff should inquire within their unit related to the purchase and distribution of face coverings.
- Cloth face coverings do not have to be plain or Cyclone spirit, but please be respectful of others in choosing the design or pattern.

ISU Extension and Outreach county staff, council members, and volunteers

- We strongly encourage county staff, volunteers, and council members follow state staff expectations.
- Extension councils are encouraged to provide face coverings to staff, council members, and volunteers if they need them. Disposable and cloth face coverings are available for purchase from the [Extension Store](#). Supplies of cloth face coverings are limited to staff, volunteers, and council members only at this time.
- Cloth face coverings do not have to be plain or Cyclone spirit, but please be respectful of others in choosing the design or pattern.

Face Coverings for Participants and Visitors

The following recommendations apply to participants in educational offerings, programs, workshops, events, or meetings held indoors or outdoors.

- Participants are strongly encouraged to wear a cloth face covering when in the presence of others and unable to maintain a six-foot physical distance. An example is when entering and exiting the building.

- Extension councils may want to have a supply of face coverings available to participants who need them. Medical-grade surgical masks or N-95 respirators should not be obtained for this purpose.
- If an event is not held in a county office – check with the venue staff about requirements and adhere to any that are more stringent. However, if venue requirements are less stringent, the recommendation is to adhere to the ones articulated in this document.
- Extension councils may require face coverings if they initiate a policy as stated by Whitfield & Eddy, extension council legal representation:
 - If extension councils have a policy requiring face coverings, and the individual does not have a health or safety reason preventing them from doing so (i.e., reasonable accommodation request due to a medical condition, loose ties on face coverings are dangerous or could get caught in machinery, etc.), then due to the pandemic, face coverings may be required.
 - If a county extension council has a policy, it needs to be enforced uniformly, meaning all entering are required to wear a face covering including council members, county directors, regional directors, and other staff. All must be prepared to comply, and employees must be empowered to report failures to comply.

Q & A

What if a staff member always wants to wear a face covering regardless of social distancing strategies?

Considerations:

- Wearing a cloth face covering is not a substitute for following physical distancing guidelines. Stay at least six feet away from other individuals.
- Avoid touching or adjusting your cloth face covering and clean your hands immediately if you do have to touch it.
- Change your cloth face covering when visibly soiled.
- Launder the face covering after each use and when it is visibly soiled.

Should staff wear a face covering when teaching?

The CDC recommends the use of cloth face coverings when feasible and when other social/physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Therefore, the most likely scenario is that a staff member would not need to wear a face covering when teaching if physical distancing is maintained. If a staff member has questions or concerns about wearing a cloth face covering, they should discuss this with their health care provider.

Can we deny entry to our county offices or programs if someone is unwilling to wear a face covering?

We checked with the extension council legal service, Whitfield & Eddy, and they stated yes, **only** if the extension council has a policy:

- If extension councils have a policy requiring face coverings, and the individual does not have a health or safety reason preventing them from doing so (i.e., reasonable accommodation request due to a medical condition, loose ties on face coverings are dangerous or could get caught in machinery, etc.), then due to the pandemic, face coverings may be required.
- If a county extension council has a policy, it needs to be enforced uniformly, meaning all entering are required to wear a face covering including council members, county directors, regional directors, and other staff. All must be prepared to comply, and employees must be empowered to report failures to comply.

May I remove my face covering at my desk?

Yes, if 6-foot distancing is possible, you may remove your face covering at your desk. Put it back on when in hallways, common areas, a co-worker's space, or when a visitor enters your office or workspace. See pg. 6 of [ISU Guide for Returning to the Workplace](#).

Whenever you remove your cloth face covering, store in a way that will decrease the risk of contamination of surfaces. Refer to CDC's [How to Safely Wear and Take Off A Cloth Face Covering](#).

What if a person who is hard of hearing or deaf requests a staff member to remove their face covering?

If you are communicating with a person who has a hearing loss, remember to

- Speak slowly, clearly and at normal volume
- Face each other when you talk at a safe distance
- Rephrase remarks when they are not understood
- Other ways to communicate may include text, writing, or gestures
- Reduce noise in the area
- Are you able to remain at a safe distance of at least six feet away from others, to safely remove the face covering?

Source: WHO TV News Article, [Face Masks Create Communication Barrier for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Iowans](#)

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