



Public Health Brief

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April 6, 2020

Use of Face Coverings by Essential Workers*

(*The guidance below does not apply to first responders and other healthcare workers who may encounter persons suspected or known to be infected with COVID-19. In those cases, they should follow guidelines from their employer or regulatory agency.)

Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance, I am hereby ordering the use of cloth face coverings by employees when working in a facility and in the vicinity of fellow employees or when outside the home conducting essential activities involving contact with the public, until the risk of COVID-19 within the community subsides. This guidance does not substitute for existing guidance about social distancing and frequent handwashing.

Guidance

- The best community and individual defense against COVID-19 is washing hands frequently; avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands; avoiding being around sick people and physical distancing, by staying home to the extent possible. A strong health care delivery system and emergency response system are also an essential core defense to save lives when people do get ill.
- To reduce asymptomatic transmission and reinforce physical distancing, use of face coverings in public is recommended. It is important to continue physical distancing and frequent hand washing when using face coverings.

This guidance is intended to aid in reducing transmission without putting increased demand on the supply of medical grade equipment to be prioritized for our healthcare workforce, such as N95 and surgical masks.



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Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120

Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281

District 1: Donald M. Jardine, District 2: Ron Hames, District 3: Katherine Rakow,

District 4: Terry Woodrow, District 5: David Griffith

What is a cloth face covering?

A cloth face covering is a material that covers the nose and mouth. It can be secured to the head with ties or straps or simply wrapped around the lower face. It can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton, silk, or linen. A cloth face covering may be factory-made or sewn by hand or can be improvised from household items such as scarfs, T-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels.

How well do cloth face coverings work to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

There is limited evidence to suggest that use of cloth face coverings by the public during a pandemic could help reduce disease transmission. Their primary role is to reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes, including someone who has COVID-19 but feels well. Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing, washing hands and staying home when ill, but they may be helpful when combined with these primary interventions.

When should I wear a cloth face covering?

It is recommended that employees wear a cloth face covering when you are working in a facility and in the vicinity of fellow employees, and when your essential activities include contact with the public. You should also wear a face covering when you must be in public for essential activities, such as shopping at the grocery store. Wearing a cloth face covering does not eliminate the need for physical distancing from others (i.e., stay at least 6 feet apart).

How should I care for a cloth face covering?

It's a good idea to wash a cloth face covering frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily. Have a bag or bin to keep cloth face coverings in until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face. Discard cloth face coverings that:

- No longer cover the nose and mouth
- Have stretched out or have damaged ties or straps
- Cannot stay on the face
- Have holes or tears in the fabric



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I already have some N95s or facemasks. Can I wear them at work instead of a cloth face covering?

You may use masks that you already have. Please do not try to purchase more facemasks to avoid supply shortages that will severely impact our healthcare system. Also, you must be careful in handling N95 and facemasks because they can become contaminated. Do not touch the inside, and wash hands before handling and after taking the mask off. Do not store a mask in a plastic container; it is better to use a paper bag so the moisture can evaporate.

Self-Screening

In addition to wearing a cloth face covering, **daily each morning**, all employees can use the following simple self-screening process to lessen the community spread of COVID-19.

1. Do you currently, or in the last 24 hours, have any of the following symptoms:
 - a. Fever (subjective or measured)
 - b. Cough
 - c. Shortness of breath
 - d. Sore throat

If you have any of the above symptoms or if you have a recorded temperature of greater than 100.4 degrees, you should stay home and work with your supervisor/manager on alternate work arrangements. For employees going to a facility to do essential work, please continue to check for symptoms throughout the day. If symptoms develop, tell your supervisor and go home immediately.

Employees Exposed to COVID-19

Employees exposed to someone (such as in a household) confirmed to have COVID-19 should consult with us about any possible actions to take based on individual circumstances. Employees should remain at home and contact their supervisor(s) to discuss all viable options as recommended by the local public health office.

To obtain face coverings, or to donate them, contact Jessica Bennet at 530-694-2146 at HHS. For any other questions, contact the Warm Line at 530-694-1011.

Stay in place, maintain your space and cover your face

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>



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