Use of Facial Coverings

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) provided updated guidance on the use of cloth facial coverings for the general public as the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity, even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. **As a proactive measure, the agency is requiring all employees who come to the worksite to use facial coverings.**

- The CDC stresses that maintaining good hygiene such as frequent washing/sanitizing of hands, avoiding touching your face, and keeping a 6-feet social distancing continues to remain **the most effective method** to slow the spread of the virus.

- The CDC is advising the use of **simple cloth face coverings** as an additional measure to slow the spread of the virus – especially for people who may have the virus, but do not have symptoms yet. The cloth face coverings recommended are **not surgical masks or N-95 respirators**. The CDC stresses that those types of masks should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.

- Cloth face coverings can be made from common materials and household items. The CDC provides useful information on making your own face coverings. This information is provided as an Attachment, below.

- Employees are encouraged to use their own face coverings as they can be customized for personal comfort and any medical conditions. The Commission also will make face coverings available to employees.

When using face coverings, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Employees with respiratory (such as asthma, COPD, or other lung concerns), diabetes, heart, or other conditions should consult with their medical provider for appropriate facial coverings. Employees who are unable to wear face coverings due to medical concerns should contact the Safety Office for guidance at (301) 454-1781.

- Face coverings should be comfortable and should not have excess cloth that could get caught in work being performed. If there are any questions on safety, the supervisor or employee may contact the agency’s Safety Office.

- Employees must continue to wear all other personal protective equipment that is normally required to perform their specific jobs. For example, some positions are required to wear safety shoes, hearing protection, etc.

- Employees should ensure that face covering choices remain respectful to others.

Any questions regarding facial coverings, please call the Safety Office: 301-454-1781. Employees represented by a Union should also refer to their specific Collective Bargaining Agreement MOUs.
Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings
Cloth face coverings should—
• fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
• be secured with ties or ear loops
• include multiple layers of fabric
• allow for breathing without restriction
• be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

CDC on Homemade Cloth Face Coverings
CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings 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. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

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 medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Should cloth face coverings be washed or otherwise cleaned regularly? How regularly?
Yes. They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use.

How does one safely sterilize/clean a cloth face covering?
A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a cloth face covering.

How does one safely remove a used cloth face covering?
Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their cloth face covering and wash hands immediately after removing.

[cdc.gov/coronavirus]
Sewn Cloth Face Covering

Materials
- Two 10"x6" rectangles of cotton fabric
- Two 6" pieces of elastic (or rubber bands, string, cloth strips, or hair ties)
- Needle and thread (or bobby pin)
- Scissors
- Sewing machine

Tutorial

1. Cut out two 10-by-6-inch rectangles of cotton fabric. Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets. T-shirt fabric will work in a pinch. Stack the two rectangles; you will sew the cloth face covering as if it was a single piece of fabric.

2. Fold over the long sides ½ inch and hem. Then fold the double layer of fabric over ½ inch along the short sides and stitch down.

3. Run a 6-inch length of 1/8-inch wide elastic through the wider hem on each side of the cloth face covering. These will be the ear loops. Use a large needle or a bobby pin to thread it through. Tie the ends tight. Don’t have elastic? Use hair ties or elastic head bands. If you only have string, you can make the ties longer and tie the cloth face covering behind your head.

4. Gently pull on the elastic so that the knots are tucked inside the hem. Gather the sides of the cloth face covering on the elastic and adjust so the cloth face covering fits your face. Then securely stitch the elastic in place to keep it from slipping.
Quick Cut T-shirt Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

Materials
- T-shirt
- Scissors

Tutorial
1. Cut T-shirt along 7-8 inches.

2. Cut out 6-7 inches for tie strings.

3. Tie strings around neck, then over top of head.

Bandana Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

Materials
- Bandana (or square cotton cloth approximately 20"x20")
- Coffee filter
- Rubber bands (or hair ties)
- Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)

Tutorial
1. Cut coffee filter.

2. Fold filter in center of folded bandana.

3. Fold top down. Fold bottom up.

4. Place rubber bands or hair ties about 6 inches apart.

5. Fold side to the middle and tuck.