COVID-19 Employee Face Covering Guidance

Beginning November 20, 2021 per Montgomery County Board of Health Regulation No. 19-975, face coverings, also referred to as masks, must be worn in indoor public spaces until further notice.

Guidance Statement
The County’s operations are regulated by Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MOSH), which has established guidance related to face coverings and other respiratory protection.

Effective November 20, 2021, at 12:01 a.m. all persons are required to wear face coverings when in publicly accessible areas Countywide, including County facilities.

Note: If your worksite and/or departmental internal policy requires a different face covering or mask type, please follow that policy as instructed.

Public Safety & Healthcare Employees: Public safety and healthcare employees must follow the internal policies of their respective agencies concerning the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) while on duty and guidelines for entering agency facilities. In settings where any employee provides healthcare services or healthcare support services, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued the following standard: 29 CFR 1910.500 Subpart U-COVID-19 Healthcare ETS, which must be followed.

This guidance shall remain in effect until further notice. The current public health crisis related to the COVID-19 pandemic will be monitored closely to inform any decision to modify or terminate this policy.

Purpose
Montgomery County Government is committed to the safety and health of our employees and others as employees provide the public with efficient, high quality, and compassionate continuation of services of governmental functions.

The County requires that all employees wear face coverings while in publicly accessible areas of County office buildings, facilities, vehicles, and other worksites to protect the workforce and the public with the goal of reducing potential COVID-19 exposures.

Definitions
- **Publicly Accessible Area**: Any portion of a County facility that the public can access or where the public can reasonably be expected to be present.
- **Face Covering**: A face covering should be made of at least two layers of a tightly woven breathable material and should not have exhalation valves or vents. It should fit snugly over the nose, mouth, and chin with no large gaps on the outside of the face. Examples of face coverings include cloth masks, surgical masks, KN95s, etc.
- **Respirator (e.g., N95)**: Specialized equipment worn by healthcare workers providing care to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases or by public safety employees in accordance with their department’s directives. Respirator usage is only indicated for specific job classifications or procedures. Proper utilization requires fit testing by OMS or Public Health.
Face Covering Supply and Training

- The County shall provide respiratory protection and usage guidance to all onsite employees who fall under OSHA ETS Requirements. Directors will be responsible for ensuring all onsite employees have received the proper respiratory protection and training as required by OSHA. For additional information, see: **MCSP-23, Department Directions for Personal Protective Equipment During COVID-19**. (Press CTRL + CLICK to follow the link.)
  - In settings where any employee provides healthcare services or healthcare support services, OSHA 29 CFR 1910.500 Subpart U-COVID-19 Healthcare ETS must be followed. If you have any questions concerning the ETS standard please contact the Risk Management Safety Team at: riskmanagement.finance@montgomerycountymd.gov.
  - Please note the cleaning instructions in the MCSP-23 Department Directions for PPE (link above), section 4.0, B. for masks, are only applicable to N-95 masks. If applicable, cloth face coverings should be laundered or rinsed in hot soapy water and dried daily.

- Employees are responsible for maintaining and cleaning of all face coverings and respiratory protection.
- Face coverings must not contain graphics or images that are or may be potentially offensive, insensitive, inappropriate, intimidating or in any other way not consistent with the County mission, the County EEO regulations, or departmental policies.
- To access the Facial Covering Policy and De-escalation training module, contact your department Worksite Safety Coordinator (Press CTRL + CLICK to follow link). The training can also be accessed by using the NEW Safety and Health website at: mcgov.sharepoint.com/sites/safetybeginswithyou

Entering County Buildings

- All visitors entering any County building will be required to wear a face covering for the duration of their stay in the building. Visitors not wearing a face covering will not be permitted to enter any County building.
- Employees may remove their face covering while they are working in areas that are not generally accessible to the public. These employees must put on their face covering when entering areas where the public may be found.
- Non-vaccinated employees are highly encouraged to wear a face covering at all times while in County facilities whether the public is present or not.

Exceptions

- Any employee who is unable to wear a face covering due to a disability or medical condition consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act should immediately contact Occupational Medical Services in the Office of Human Resources at medicalinfo.oms@montgomerycountymd.gov or 240-777-5118.

Failure to Follow Guidance

If the County determines that this guidance is not being adhered to by employees, it may be amended to include appropriate disciplinary actions.

Additional Guidance

- **MCSP-23, Department Directions for Personal Protective Equipment During COVID-19**
- **CDC Guidance on Proper Use and Maintenance of Cloth Face Coverings**

Questions about this guidance may be directed to Gary Stafford, Risk Management Safety Manager, via email at gary.stafford@montgomerycountymd.gov.