



# Reopening Guidance FAQs

## Statewide Mask, Face Shield, Face Covering Guidance

(Updated 8-18-2020)

Below are answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) [Statewide Reopening Guidance for Masks, Face Shields and Face Coverings](#). OHA provides these FAQs to help the public understand the guidance, to respond to stakeholder questions, and to clarify how the guidance may apply in specific scenarios. These FAQs may be intermittently updated. The FAQs are not intended to take the place of the guidance, but rather to interpret, supplement and provide details of the guidance.

### For purposes of these FAQs the following definitions apply:

- “Face covering” means a cloth, paper, or disposable face covering that covers the nose and the mouth.
- “Face shield” means a clear plastic shield that covers the forehead, extends below the chin, and wraps around the sides of the face.
- “Mask” means a medical grade mask.

### Statewide Guidance Questions:

#### Q1: Am I required to wear a mask, face shield or face covering in public?

A1: Yes, in most businesses, indoor spaces open to the public, and outdoor spaces open to the public individuals five (5) years of age and older are required to wear a mask, face shield or face covering.

To see the list of businesses where masks, face shields or face coverings are required, review the [statewide guidance](#).

It is **strongly recommended** that everyone, including children between two (2) and five (5) years of age, wear a mask, face shield or face covering at all times in indoor and outdoor public spaces. This is especially important in places where people who are at a higher risk of serious illness or death are present and where people cannot keep physical distance of at least six (6) feet from others outside their household.

**Q2: Are there any exemptions from the mask, face shield, face covering requirements?**

A2: There are limited times when you do not have to wear a mask, face shield or face covering at a location covered by the statewide guidance, but no exemptions:

- Masks, face coverings or face shields are not required for employees, contractors or volunteers when the employee, contractor or volunteer does not have a job that requires interacting with the public **and** can keep six (6) or more feet of distance between people. An example is a large well-ventilated warehouse where more than six (6) feet can be consistently maintained between people and the public does not have access.
- Masks, face shields or face coverings are not required while eating or drinking. However, indoor spaces generally are associated with increased risk of virus transmission. Choose an outdoor space for eating and drinking when possible.
- Masks, face shields or face coverings are not required for individuals who are engaged in an activity that makes wearing a mask, face shield or face covering not feasible, such as when swimming or playing a woodwind or brass instrument.
- Masks, face shields or face coverings can be briefly removed in situations where identity needs to be confirmed by visual comparison, such as at a bank or if interacting with law enforcement. If possible, limit speaking while the cover is off as speaking generates aerosols and droplets that can contain viruses.

**Q2(a): Are there religious exemptions from wearing a mask, face shield or face covering?**

A2(a): No. There are limited times when you do not have to wear a mask, face shield or face covering at a location covered by the statewide guidance. For example, masks, face shields or face coverings are not required for people at a business or indoor or outdoor space open to the public when people are engaged in an activity that makes wearing a mask, face shield or face covering not feasible, such as when swimming or playing a woodwind or brass instrument. Masks, face coverings or face shields are required when singing or playing an instrument. See response above for more information.

**Q3: What should I do if a potential customer or visitor shows up without a mask, face shield or face covering to my business or the indoor or outdoor public space I am responsible for?**

A3: You could offer a mask, face shield or face covering. Businesses and persons responsible for indoor and outdoor spaces open to the public should, but are not required to, provide, at no cost, disposable face coverings for customers or visitors who do not have one.

**Q3(a): What should I do if a potential customer or visitor shows up without a mask, face shield or face covering and claims their disability prevents them from wearing a mask, face shield, or face covering?**

A3(a): If a person with a disability cannot wear a mask, face shield or face covering, a place of public accommodation, such as a business or space open to the public, will need to work with that person to seek a reasonable modification to access their services, such as curbside pick-up, delivery or an appointment by phone or video. A reasonable modification does not include simply allowing a customer inside without a mask, face covering or face shield.

**Q3(b): Can I ask a person who claims their disability prevents them from wearing a mask, face shield, or face covering for a doctor's note or can I ask them for specific information about their disability?**

A3(b): No, you should not ask an individual with a disability for a doctor's note or other similar proof of their disability. If an individual informs you that they are unable to wear a mask, face shield, or face covering, you must consider what reasonable modifications you can make to allow the individual access to services.

**Q3(c): What if a person refuses to wear a mask, face shield, or face covering and does not have a disability?**

A3(c): The place of public accommodation should refuse service.

**Q4: Are there exemptions from the requirement to wear a mask, face shield, or face covering for employees who say they cannot wear one?**

A4: No. Aside from situations where employees are at or in a location where they are not interacting with the public and six (6) feet or more of distance can be maintained between other people, employees must comply with the mask requirement. If an employee cannot wear a mask, face shield or face covering because of a disability, the employer must work with the employee to determine whether a reasonable accommodation can be provided. An employer should work with their human resources department or speak to their legal counsel to determine their legal options for addressing this issue. Employers may also reach out to the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) for technical assistance.

**Q5: What should a transit provider do if a customer tries to get on the bus and says they have a health condition and cannot wear a mask/face covering?**

A5: A transit provider should arrange separate transportation for the person or make some other reasonable accommodation to provide transportation for the person, but the person should not be allowed on the bus.

**Q6: If a person cannot or is not wearing a mask or a face covering, but has a face shield on, does that meet the requirement?**

A6: Yes, a face shield that covers the forehead, extends below the chin, and wraps around the sides of the face is acceptable.

**Q7: Is a chef's plastic facemask that covers the chin and mouth area acceptable as a mask, face shield or face covering?**

A7: No. A face shield must cover the forehead, extend below the chin and wrap around the sides of the face.

**Q8: Does the government issue any documents to people with disabilities that state the person does not have to wear a mask, face shield or face covering?**

A8: No, the government does not provide documents that exempt a person from a mask, face shield or face covering requirement.

**Q9: Where can I get more information about the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and providing accommodations for persons with disabilities?**

A9: There are some great resources out there and here are links to a few of them:

- [Disability Issues Brief, The ADA and Face Mask Policies](#)
- [Oregon OSHA Advisory Memo](#)
- The Bureau of Labor and Industries [Technical Assistance for Employers](#) program can provide guidance on the reasonable accommodation process at 971-673-0824 or [bolita@boli.state.or.us](mailto:bolita@boli.state.or.us).

Those who experience disability discrimination, including denial of service without a reasonable modification should contact the Bureau of Labor and Industries Civil Rights Division at 971-673-0764 or email [crdemail@boli.state.or.us](mailto:crdemail@boli.state.or.us).

**Q10: Will I have to wear a mask, face shield or face covering when accessing state services or entering state buildings?**

A10: Call or visit the website of the state agency before going to the location to determine whether it is open to the public.

Face coverings are required for state agency operations that operate as a “retail like operation” and are open to the general public. Examples of “retail like operations” include Department of Motor Vehicle field offices, the Department of Environmental Quality’s vehicle inspection program, and the Department of Human Services field offices.

State agency field offices have been instructed to create spaces to serve customers that are unable to wear a mask, face shield or face covering because of a disability or who refuse wear a mask, face shield or face covering – for example, an area away from other customers with a plexiglass barrier between the employee and the customer.

Customers will be offered a face covering if they do not have one.

Masks, face shields or face coverings are required in common areas of state government office buildings such as lobbies, restrooms and lunchrooms that are open to the public.

**Q11: Are masks, face shields or face coverings required in local government buildings that are open to the public?**

A11: Yes, the mask, face shield or face covering requirement applies in local government buildings if they are open to the general public.

**Q12: Does the Statewide Mask, Face Covering, Face Shield guidance apply to businesses not open to the public?**

A12: No. A full list of businesses and public spaces required to follow this guidance can be found in the [Statewide Mask, Face Shield, Face Covering Guidance](#). Employers of businesses listed in this guidance and operators of public spaces are required to implement the guidance for both indoor and outdoor spaces.

**Q13: What is the guidance on masks, face shields or face coverings indoors or outdoors where there is no exposure to the public, like a manufacturing plant?**

A13: The requirement to wear a mask, face shield or face covering is not just about protecting the public. It is about protecting other employees as well. If the indoor or outdoor area is not a business, or an indoor or outdoor space open to the public, as is defined in the guidance, masks, face shields or face coverings are not required. However, COVID-19 transmission is still possible in these locations. Therefore, in all locations, masks, face shields, face coverings are strongly recommended, particularly if people cannot keep a distance of at least six (6) feet from others. Virus transmission risk can be further reduced by increasing ventilation (e.g., by opening windows and doors) to the extent possible.

**Q14: If an employee is working behind plexiglass does that employee have to wear a mask, face shield or face covering?**

A14: Yes. Employees, contractors and volunteers must wear a mask, face shield or face covering in businesses and indoor and outdoor public spaces as defined in the [Statewide Mask, Face Shield, Face Covering Guidance](#). Masks, face coverings or face shields are not required for employees, contractors or volunteers when the employee, contractor or volunteer does not have a job that requires interacting with the public **and** can keep six (6) or more feet of distance between people. An example is a large well-ventilated warehouse where more than six (6) feet can be consistently maintained between people and the public does not have access.

**Q15: Do child care places and schools follow the statewide mask, face shield and face covering requirement?**

A15: No. Child care facilities follow the [Specific Guidance for Child Care Sector](#) and schools follow the [ODE guidance](#) which includes requirements and recommendations on masks, face shields, and face coverings for staff, students, visitors and volunteers.

**Q16: Does the statewide mask, face shield and face covering guidance apply to institutions of higher education (colleges and universities)?**

A16: Yes. The guidance applies to indoor and outdoor public spaces at higher education institutions.

**Q17: Does the Statewide Mask, Face Covering, Face Shield guidance apply to outdoor construction work?**

A17: Yes. If physical distancing of at least six (6) feet is not possible, outdoor construction workers must wear a mask, face covering or face shield.

**Q18: Does the Statewide Mask, Face Covering, Face Shield guidance apply to summer camps that operate in those counties?**

A18: No. In all counties, summer camps must follow the [Statewide Guidance for School Aged Summertime Day Camps](#), which includes requirements and recommendations on masks, face shields, and face coverings for staff, students, visitors and volunteers.

**Q19: What barriers may people of color have when wearing face coverings?**

A19: People of color may experience harassment, bias, exclusion or other negative reactions or effects when wearing masks or face coverings. This may be because of racial bias, stereotyping, or discrimination. This discrimination may be against Oregon law. Oregon law does not allow hate or bias crime. A hate or bias crime is a criminal act, including offensive physical contact, assault, property damage or threats, that may be motivated by another person's perceived:

- Race,
- Color,
- Disability,
- Religion,
- National origin,
- Sexual orientation, or
- Gender identity.

Bias *incidents* are any hostile expression toward another person, including hate language, mocking, mimicking, exclusion, or discriminatory refusal of service, relating to the other person's perceived protected class (listed above).

A person who experiences a hate or bias crime or incident because of wearing of a mask, face covering or face shield in public has resources available to help them. To report a **bias crime**, call law enforcement at 911. To report a **bias incident**, call the Oregon Department of Justice at 1-844-924-BIAS (2427). Dial 711 for Oregon Relay. For more information, go to [StandAgainstHate.Oregon.gov](#). To file a civil rights complaint visit Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) [website](#) or call 971-673-0764.

**Q20: What barriers may people with disabilities experience when other people wear masks, face shields or face coverings?**

A20: Barriers people with disabilities may experience are:

- Some people need to see mouth movements or facial expressions to know what you are saying.
- Some people with developmental disabilities or differences can misread or misinterpret facial expressions. A person may have trouble with understanding emotion from tone of voice alone. If you're wearing a mask, they may get cues only from your eyes or eyebrows, which could lead to a negative interpretation or misunderstanding of the emotion or intent of the speaker.
- Some people who are hard of hearing read lips. Mouth movements and facial expressions can communicate a lot of information and masks that are not clear prevent people from seeing the speaker's mouth.
- Sign language uses the mouth to communicate certain words and meanings. When a face covering blocks a person's mouth, it makes it hard for people using sign language to communicate.

Employers and places of public accommodations must work with persons with a disability to arrange a reasonable accommodation that will permit an employee to do their job or allow a patron to access services. Those denied a reasonable accommodation should contact Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) [Civil Rights Division](#) at 971-673-0764 or [crdemail@boli.state.or.us](mailto:crdemail@boli.state.or.us).

**Q21: How can I communicate well while I wear a mask, face shield or face covering so that someone with a disability can understand me?**

A21: Be sure to have a plan to use other communication methods such as:

- Use hand gestures or sign language as appropriate
- Have a notepad and pen ready (following proper cleaning guidelines)
- Have printed instructions with pictures and large print
- Have a small dry erase board and marker that you disinfect at each use
- Download a speech-to-text app on your phone (following proper physical distancing guidelines)

**Q22: Can transparent face coverings help with the above barriers?**

A22: Yes. Solid face coverings may block the entire face. People with disabilities may rely on seeing the speaker's face to communicate well and interpret situations.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing are usually in favor of transparent face coverings, like face shields. These coverings can ease communication.

Droplets and aerosols released from coughing or sneezing are only partially blocked by masks, face coverings and face shields. For this reason, OHA still recommends the following:

- Limit social and recreational activities where people cannot stay six (6) feet apart.
- Stay at least six (6) feet from others during necessary trips such as to grocery stores, pharmacies, healthcare places or to other essential locations.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and throw it away immediately; or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not into your hands. Follow with cleaning hands with soap and water or with hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth or face.
- Clean your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol content) if you cannot wash your hands.
- If you are sick, isolate yourself. Stay away from work, family and friends. Stay away until 72 hours after both fever and cough have gone away without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

You can make transparent, non-FDA approved face coverings at home. You can find a transparent face covering template [here](#).

Please refer to [Statewide Reopening Guidance for Masks, Face Shields and Face Coverings](#).

**Q23: Is there anyone who should not wear a mask, face shield or face covering?**

**A23:** The following should not wear a mask, face shield or face covering:

- Children under the age of two (2).
- Anyone who cannot safely wear a mask, face shield or face covering because of a disability or medical condition, in which case an accommodation should be requested.
- Anyone who is having trouble breathing, is unconscious, or unable to put on the face covering, take it off or remove it without help.

**Q24: Are masks with exhalation valves acceptable for people who are required to wear masks?**

**A24:** No. Masks with exhalation valves are intended to make breathing easier and prevent humidity buildup. Depending on mask type and mask fit, these masks can protect the wearer from inhaling droplets and aerosols. However, most of these masks do not filter exhaled or forced aerosols and droplets because the exhalation valve is not equipped with a filter. These masks are not acceptable to prevent

transmission of microbes. They are only acceptable in situations where masks, face shields or face coverings are not required.

**Q25: What is the age recommendation for masks, face shields, or face coverings for children when outdoors?**

**A25:** A mask, face shield or face covering is required for all people ages five (5) years and older when in outdoor public spaces when at least six (6) feet of physical distance cannot be maintained. OHA **strongly recommends** that children between two (2) and five (5) years of age, wear a mask, face shield, or face covering at all times in an outdoor area where they cannot keep physical distancing of at least six (6) feet. The same is true in all indoor public places particularly in places where people are not likely to keep physical distancing of at least six (6) feet from others outside their household, and in places where vulnerable people must go.

**Q26: Will a mask, face shield or face covering protect me from COVID-19?**

**A26:** Masks, face shields or face coverings can reduce the spread of COVID-19. This includes spread from people who have the virus but no symptoms. As Oregon reopens businesses and public spaces following the guidelines below is more important than ever:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- If you are at higher risk, stay home as much as possible even if you feel well.
- If you become sick while in public, return home, self-isolate, and call your health care provider.
- Wash your hands often.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and objects.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow or tissue.
- Do not touch your [face](#).
- Keep [physical distance](#) - six (6) feet between you and people with whom you do not live.
- Avoid overnight trips and travel the minimum distance needed to obtain essential services.

**Q27: Where can I get more information about face coverings, such as how to make them, where to get them, and other tips?**

**A27:** Visit the [CDC website](#) for more information.

**Q28: Is it safe to wear a mask or cloth face covering for prolonged periods of time?**

**A28:** Yes. Prolonged masking is common in many occupations to protect workers. Some examples include healthcare workers (e.g., performing prolonged surgery), construction (e.g., protection against dust and other particles) and environmental workers (e.g., mold remediation).

**Q29: What if I feel uncomfortable wearing a face covering?**

A29: People who feel uncomfortable wearing a cloth face covering for prolonged periods should consider alternative cloth material and take frequent short breaks while away from people, as needed.

**Q30: What is the correct way to put on a cloth face covering?**

A30: Below are instructions for how to put on a cloth face covering:

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth. If wearing a mask, secure it under your chin
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Do not put the covering around your neck, or on your forehead
- Do not touch the face covering while wearing it. If you touch the covering, wash your hands afterwards

**Q31: What is the correct way to remove a cloth face covering, a face mask, or face shield?**

A31: Below are instructions for how to remove your face covering, face mask, or face shield:

- Handle cover, mask, or shield only by ties, straps, or ear loops
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing.
- Wash your hands immediately after removing a face covering.

**Q32: What is the correct way to wash a cloth face covering, a face mask, or face shield?**

A32:

- Cloth face covering: If your cloth face covering becomes dirty or wet, wash it with soapy water and dry it before re-using. You can also include it in your regular laundry if it does not damage the material.
- Medical masks: These should not be washed. Dispose of a medical mask at the end of the day or if it becomes dirty or wet earlier.
- Face shields: Clean once or more a day by gently scrubbing with soapy water or uniformly spraying with 60-95% alcohol solution if it does not damage the face shield material.

**Q33: How will the mask, face shield, face covering requirement be enforced?**

**A33:** The state will first seek to work with businesses and persons responsible for indoor and outdoor spaces open to the public to educate them about the requirements prior to taking any enforcement action.

Businesses and persons responsible for indoor and outdoor spaces open to the public are expected to ensure that their employees, contractors, volunteers, customers and visitors comply with the mask, face shield, face covering requirement. If a business or person responsible for an indoor or outdoor space is making every effort to comply, that will be taken into consideration in any potential enforcement action.

It is a Class C misdemeanor to violate the mask, face covering, face shield requirement. The Oregon Health Authority and Local Public Health Authorities can issue civil penalties and take other enforcement actions for violations of the mask, face shield, face covering requirement. An individual or business that has a state issued license, may be subject to a licensing action for violating the mask, face shield, face covering guidance.

**Document accessibility:** For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact Mavel Morales at 1-844-882-7889, 711 TTY or [OHA.ADAModifications@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:OHA.ADAModifications@dhsoha.state.or.us).