

<b>Guidelines Title:</b>	COVID-19 Mask and Face Covering Use Guidelines		
<b>Issue Date:</b>	August 2020	<b>Revised Date:</b>	
<b>Document #:</b>	1644667		



Source: Government of British Columbia.

### PURPOSE

The following guidelines are meant to provide information and details surrounding the wearing of masks and face coverings as a control measure meant to stop the spread of COVID-19. For your own safety, for the safety of your colleagues and others around you, we ask that you adhere to these guidelines and the city policy on mask wearing. See city Mask and Face Covering Policy, EDMS document number 1643555.

Not everyone who has COVID-19 has symptoms and some people do not even realize that they are infected. Wearing a mask or face covering may assist in reducing the risk of an infected person unknowingly transmitting COVID-19 to others.

Wearing a mask or face covering helps reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 if you are sick and protects people who are around you. Since individuals may be transmitting the disease while having minimal or no signs or symptoms of illness, they should wear a mask or face covering. When other people wear a mask or face covering, they are helping to protect you.

Wearing a mask or face covering does not guarantee protection from COVID-19 and should not replace proven measures such as frequent handwashing, avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, avoiding groups of people and crowded spaces, practicing physical distancing and staying at home when sick.

## **MASK AND FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS**

The City of New Westminster COVID-19 Re-opening Safety Plan (“COVID-19 Safety Plan”), mask and face covering policy, and other city policies refer to situations when masks or face coverings are required, strongly encouraged or optional (i.e. personal choice). See city Mask and Face Covering Policy, EDMS document number 1643555.

## **MASK OR FACE COVERING DESCRIPTIONS**

The following describes masks and face coverings for use as COVID-19 controls (*see also Figure 1*):

**Masks:** A mask is a *medical-grade or non-medical grade* face mask (also known as a surgical or procedure mask) that does not seal tightly to the face to act as a filter. They have the same purpose as a face covering, but are subject to testing and design standards to ensure they perform as intended.

**Face Coverings:** A face covering is typically a handmade mask made of cotton or similar fabrics although they may be purchased as a manufactured article. They are used to contain and prevent the spread of fluids containing germs, in the form of respiratory droplets, to others and environmental surfaces.

**Respirator (Filtering Facepiece or FFR):** A filtering facepiece respirator (e.g., N95) protects the wearer by filtering particles from the air the wearer breathes. These respirators are intended to seal tightly to the wearer's face and are subject to rigorous testing standards.

Medical masks, including surgical, medical procedure face masks and respirators (like N95 filtering facepiece respirators), must be kept for health care workers and others providing direct care to COVID-19 patients. For the purposes of this guidance where the term ‘mask’ is used, it is meant as a “*non-medical mask*” or face covering.

Some commercially available masks have exhalation valves that make the mask more breathable for the person wearing it, but these valves also allow infectious respiratory droplets to spread outside the mask. These are not to be used as a COVID-19 protection means.

City employees will be provided with 2 city-branded reusable masks or disposable masks. If city employees wish to make their own reusable face coverings, below are links for guidance on making their own reusable face covering:

- BC Centres for Disease Control (BC CDC)  
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/sew-no-sew-instructions-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>

### **Face Shield or Visor Use**

A face shield is not a substitute for wearing a mask or face covering as it does not filter respiratory droplets. A face shield may provide additional protection for the wearer against droplets expelled from another person; however, these droplets may still be inhaled around the shield. Respiratory droplets expelled by the wearer may escape around the sides of the face shield, which therefore provides less protection to others.

A face shield may be worn in addition to an engineering control, such as a barrier, or in addition to wearing a properly fitted mask or face covering.

Although a face shield is not considered an equal substitute for a face mask, the use of a face shield may be a “better than nothing” alternative to face masks if there is either a shortage of non-medical masks or for persons who are unable to properly wear a mask or face covering. This could include for example, an individual with a respiratory condition that prevents them from wearing a mask or face covering.

To be effective, a face shield needs to extend lower than the chin, beyond the ears and there should be no gap between the forehead and the shield’s head piece.

Coronavirus COVID-19



# Face masks: How are they different?

Physical distancing, hand washing and staying at home if you are sick are the most effective ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19; masks do not replace these actions. Masks, face coverings and gloves are the least protective measures for reducing transmission of COVID-19. Masks, when worn properly and for short periods, may offer some protection especially when you are not able to keep a 2 metre distance from others. For work settings, refer to specific workplace guidance on masks.



### Cloth masks (homemade or bought)

- May be used by the general public to reduce the spread of large respiratory droplets. However, these masks offer minimal protection to the wearer.
- Can be made from various types of machine-washable and dryable cloth.
- If homemade, use clean woven cotton or linen e.g., a tea towel, bedsheet, pillowcase, t-shirt.
- Must be designed and worn to fully cover nose and mouth.
- Should fit snugly, let you breathe easily, and attached securely with ties or ear loops.
- Re-usable and need to be washed regularly.



### Other cloth face coverings

- E.g., bandana, niqab, scarf, neck gaiter.
- May be used to reduce the spread of large respiratory droplets. However, face coverings offer limited protection to the wearer.
- If the material is thin, fold it into several layers.
- Be sure that it covers mouth, nose and sides of the face.



### Industrial N95 respirators

- Used to protect workers from inhaling dust, fumes, and hazardous aerosols.
- Available in hardware stores.
- These masks are not recommended to prevent COVID-19 because if they have a valve and you cough/sneeze, you may spread a stream of germs through the valve.

## Personal protective equipment (PPE)

These medical masks/respirators should be reserved for health providers or those caring for sick people.



### Medical/surgical masks

- Used by healthcare workers or those caring for sick people. Not for general use, in order to reserve critical supply for healthcare.
- Protect against large droplets.
- Flat/pleated or cup shaped with a looser fit.
- Water resistant; and may come with visor.
- Meant for one-time use.



### Medical N95 respirators

- Used by healthcare workers in healthcare settings. Not for use by the general public.
- Protect against inhaling and exhaling very small airborne particles and aerosols.
- Fits closely over the nose and mouth to form a tight seal.
- Must be custom fit and worn properly.

Learn more at [www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks)

May 26, 2020

FIGURE 1. MASK AND FACE COVERINGS IN NON-HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

## **FITTING, USE, CLEANING, AND DISPOSAL**

This section provides guidance regarding the use and care of masks and face coverings.

### **Fitting**

A properly fitted mask or face covering sits closely over the mouth, nose, cheeks and chin of the person wearing it. The mask will be less effective if the shape or the material has gaps in it because it will allow droplets to pass through.

It is important to make sure the mask can be held in place comfortably with ties or ear loops to reduce the need to adjust the mask. If it is not comfortable, you won't want to wear it consistently.

### **Cleaning and Disposal**

All masks should be changed if wet or visibly soiled; a wet mask should not be used for an extended period of time.

### **Disposable Masks**

Dispose of used masks in a wastebasket lined with a plastic bag. When emptying wastebaskets, take care to not touch used masks or tissues with your hands. All waste can go into regular garbage bins.

Clean your hands with soap and water after emptying the wastebasket.

### **Reusable Masks and Face Coverings**

Homemade or cloth masks should be cleaned and changed often:

- To clean a homemade or purchased cloth face covering, wash it using the directions on the original material (for example, if the mask was made from t-shirt material, follow the washing instructions on the t-shirt tag) but in general, warmer water is better. Dry the mask completely (in the dryer using a warm/hot setting if possible).
- Do not shake dirty masks to minimize spreading germs and particles through the air.
- If dirty cloth masks have been in contact with someone who is sick they can still be washed with other people's laundry.
- For machine washing, put the mask/face covering directly into the washing machine or in a washable bag.
- Wash the masks/face covering with other laundry using a hot water cycle.
- Wash your hands again with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after handling your mask/face covering.
- For hand washing, use laundry detergent and water as hot as you can stand, then dry thoroughly.
- When discarding damaged or worn out masks/face covering, drop them in a lined garbage bin.
- Cloth masks/face coverings can be re-used throughout the day if not soiled and undamaged. With clean hands, remove the mask from your face and fold it in half so that the outer surface is inwards (so that the contaminated outer surface is not contacting anything during storage) and place it in a clean, sealable bag until ready to use it again the same day.
- If the mask is used regularly (e.g. all day), it should be washed daily. If the mask is only used occasionally and in short durations (e.g. use in passing others in the hallway), they may be washed

weekly.

- Disposable masks/face coverings should not be washed, reused or recycled.

When masks are damaged, worn out, lost or stolen, employees should inform their supervisor or manager as soon as possible to request their replacement. Managers and supervisors (or the assigned department lead) can send their request to stores ([stores@newwestcity.ca](mailto:stores@newwestcity.ca)). Stores will deliver requested items to departments.

### Face Shield Disinfection

The following procedure should be used to clean and disinfect a face shield:

1. Put on a new pair of disposable gloves.
2. If the face shield is visibly contaminated or soiled (but foam piece is not), using a clean cloth, wipe with soap and water, cleaning from the inside to the outside.
3. Rinse with water and remove excess water.
4. Using one disinfectant wipe at a time, and first squeezing excess disinfectant into a sink to prevent splash to face, thoroughly wipe the interior, followed by the foam band, strap exterior, and exterior of the visor.
5. Ensure all surfaces remain wet with disinfectant for at least 1 minute (or applicable disinfectant wipe contact time).
6. Equipment may be rinsed with tap water if visibility is compromised by residual disinfectant.
7. Allow to dry (air dry or use clean absorbent towel).
8. Remove and dispose of gloves and wash hands with soap and water.
9. Store face shield in a designated clean area.

The above procedure should be carried out after using the face shield regardless if it is personally assigned or shared with other employees.

### PUTTING ON AND TAKING OFF A MASK OR FACE COVERING

The following steps and advice relate to putting on or taking off a mask or face covering:

1. Immediately wash your hands before putting the mask/face covering on, before adjusting it, before taking it off and after taking it off. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to wash your hands.
2. Inspect the mask or face covering before putting it on to ensure that ear loops, straps, and other parts are intact.
3. If your mask/face covering has pleats, ensure that the pleats on the outside are facing down.
4. If your mask/face covering has a metal strip over the nose, gently mould it over the bridge of your

nose to ensure a close fit.

5. Make sure your mask/face covering is secured to your head with ties or ear loops without the need to adjust frequently.
6. Make sure your mask/face covering allows for easy breathing and completely and comfortably covers the bridge of the nose, covers your mouth, fits snugly under your chin and against the sides of your face.
7. Avoid touching your mask/face covering to adjust it. This can contaminate your hands. If you do touch your mask/face covering, wash your hands.
8. Replace the mask/face covering as soon as it becomes damp, dirty, damaged or if it has shrunk after washing and drying.
9. After taking off your mask, wash your hands again with soap and water (or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before touching your face or doing anything else.
10. If your mask/face covering has a removable, non-reusable filter, make sure to remove and throw out the filter before machine or hand washing your mask.

Note: City issued reusable masks will not be equipped with filters. Should employees require filters for their own personal masks, they are to acquire them at their own cost.

11. Clean surfaces that your mask/face covering touches.
12. Do not share your mask/face covering with others.

Figure 2 below (BCCDC Poster) provides information on how to properly put on and take off a mask or watch the Government of Canada video (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-wear-non-medical-mask-face-covering-properly.html#trans>) .



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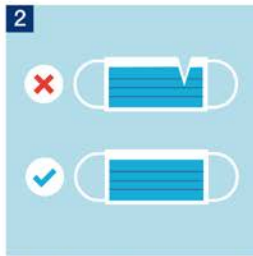
BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



## How to Wear a Face Mask



1 Wash your hands with soap and water for 20-30 seconds or perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub before touching the face mask.



2 Check the new mask to make sure it's not damaged.



3 Ensure colour side of the mask faces outwards.



4 Locate the metallic strip. Place it over and mold it to the nose bridge.



5 Place an ear loop around each ear or tie the top and bottom straps.



6 Cover mouth and nose fully, making sure there are no gaps. Pull the bottom of the mask to fully open and fit under your chin.



7 Press the metallic strip again to fit the shape of the nose. Perform hand hygiene.



8 Do not touch the mask while using it, if you do, perform hand hygiene.



9 Replace the mask if it gets wet or dirty and wash your hands again after putting it on. Do not reuse the mask.

### Removing the Mask

1 Perform hand hygiene.

2 Do not touch the front of your mask. Lean forward, gently remove the mask from behind by holding both ear loops or ties.

3 Discard the mask in a waste container.

4 Perform hand hygiene.

FIGURE 2. HOW TO PUT ON AND TAKE OFF A MASK



**ADDITIONAL MASK AND FACE COVERING USE SAFEGUARDS**

- Any damage, fabric break down, or change in fit will reduce the already limited protection of cloth masks.
- Wearing a mask or face covering can increase your risk of infection if you touch your face more frequently to adjust it or if you do not wash your hands before putting it on and taking it off. All parts of masks or face coverings can become contaminated by breathing or when touched by your hands.
- Do not leave any discarded masks/face covering in places where others can be exposed to them.