

Tips for Cloth Face Coverings During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Overview

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public. Consistent with these [guidelines](#), everyone is required to wear cloth face coverings on campus; these may be purchased or homemade. Talk to your supervisor or instructor to ensure the face covering does not create a safety hazard. Maintaining 6-foot social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. Continue to take all the necessary precautions and stay healthy.

At minimum, face coverings should be double-layered fabric. Avoid excessively thick and/or tightly woven fabrics that restrict airflow. Do not use face coverings equipped with an exhalation valve as they defeat the goal of source control. Surgical masks or N-95 respirators should be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders.

For further information, visit the FAQ on the [COVID-19 safety page](#).

How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering

- Wash your hands before placing any covering on your face
- Check to ensure a good fit. Indications of a good fit of a cloth face covering include:
 - Covers from the bridge of the nose, just below the eyes, and fully wraps the chin with at least one inch under the chin.
 - Fits securely around the face with little to no gapping.

Safely Removing Cloth Face Coverings

- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing your face covering.
- Wash hands immediately after removing.
- Note: Replace face coverings with a new one when it becomes excessively damp.
- After use, place into a sealed bag to transport for laundering. Face masks should be laundered before reuse.

Laundering Cloth Masks

- Wash and dry face coverings at the highest temperature in a standard clothes washer and dryer.

Face Coverings in Laboratories

In addition to addressing the hazards typically encountered in laboratories, a risk assessment must be conducted to determine the appropriate measures to control the spread of COVID-19. Some laboratory hazards, such as heat, fire, and corrosive liquids, may render the use of cloth face coverings (CFCs) impractical or even dangerous.

Consider the use of CFCs first; specify natural fiber or fire-retardant fabric if necessary. If laboratory hazards make the use of CFCs impractical, a medical (non-impact) face shield may be substituted. Impact or chemical resistant face shields, worn for other laboratory hazards, may

also be considered a COVID-19 barrier. See Table 1 for appropriate options. Note: Face shields do not replace the need for eye protection.

| Hazard | CFC | Medical Shield | ANSI Shield | Safety Glasses | Splash Goggles |
|---------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| COVID-19 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Chemical | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Projectile | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Table 1. Options for hazard control in laboratories