UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON COVID-19 FACE COVERING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

While keeping a physical distance of at least six feet from other people, practicing good hygiene measures (e.g., frequent hand washing, avoiding touching the face, covering coughs and sneezes), and staying home when ill are the best known protections against COVID-19, wearing a face covering that covers the nose and mouth can help protect others.

In order to help ensure the health and safety of the University of Washington (UW) campus community and the public, face coverings are required to be worn on site at the UW:

- Indoors when other people are present; this includes common areas, such as hallways, stairways, restrooms and elevators
- Outdoors when keeping a six-foot distance from others may not be possible

This requirement is in accordance with federal and state workplace safety requirements and with local public health directive. This policy is in effect until otherwise communicated.

2. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all University personnel, students, contractors, vendors and visitors, on site at a University location, unless specifically exempted below.

For the purposes of this policy “University personnel” includes:

- Staff, faculty and academic personnel, librarians, and students who work on site at a UW work location, including contract-covered, classified non-union, temporary hourly, and professional staff, Hall Health physicians, and Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) contract employees.
- Individuals who have a contingent worker relationship with the UW, stipend recipients, and others who work on site at UW, but are not employees.

3. EXEMPTIONS

UW Medicine:

UW Medicine employees and visitors to UW medical centers are required to wear face coverings and personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with UW Medicine policy.
Job-specific PPE requirements:

Face coverings do not replace required job-specific PPE, such as medical/procedure masks, face shields or respirators. See the Workplace COVID-19 Risk Level and Selection of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidance for job-specific PPE requirements.

Medical or health risk:

Face coverings are not required when:

- A medical professional has advised that wearing a face covering may pose a health risk to the person wearing the covering or impair their breathing; or
- Wearing a face covering would create a safety risk to the person as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines; or
- The person is physically unable to put on or remove the face covering without assistance; or
- The person is deaf or hard of hearing and uses facial and mouth movements as part of communication; or
- The person is a child aged 12 years or younger. Children age two and under must not wear a face mask due to risk of suffocation. Children age three to 12 are not required to wear a face covering, but if they do, they should be supervised by an adult.

Additional accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis with unit human resources representatives in coordination with the Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) Department. Employees may be required to provide documentation to substantiate their need for an exception or accommodation.

Independent work spaces, outdoors, private residential unit:

Face coverings are not required when:

- Working or spending time alone in a personal workspace, office, or other area on campus
- Working or spending time outdoors (e.g., walking, exercising) and at least a six-foot distance can be maintained
- Operating a single occupancy vehicle
- Teleworking (i.e., not reporting on site to a University work location)
- Inside a private on-campus residential unit
- Eating or drinking; a six-foot physical distance between people is required when eating and drinking and during breaks.
4. UNIVERSITY UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the University’s COVID-19 Prevention Plan, units are required to conduct an assessment to determine the required PPE for their employees. Units are required to provide all employees working on site at their UW work location with a face covering or job-required PPE and replace them when necessary. However, employees are responsible for laundering their University-issued reusable cloth face coverings and may use a personally purchased alternative face covering as appropriate.

Employees must be trained on the proper use, care, storage and disposal of face coverings and PPE. Units must communicate these requirements to all employees working on site at a UW work location and ensure all employees are trained on the University’s COVID-19 Prevention Plan.

5. POLICY ENFORCEMENT

In the Workplace:

Employees are expected to comply with the face covering requirement as a condition of employment, as well as for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues, and the UW community. Units are required to ensure all of their employees have a thorough understanding of these requirements. Employees who do not comply should be reminded of the policy by their supervisor and provided additional education and training as needed.

If, after additional education and training, an employee refuses to comply, contact your unit human resources (HR) representative to initiate the appropriate corrective action or standard of conduct process. If unit human resources representatives require assistance, they should contact their HR consultant or academic human resources (AHR) business partner.

If an employee states they are unable to wear a mask due to a health condition, refer the employee to the formal accommodation request process. Campus employees with concerns that other employees are not complying should speak with their supervisor, or report it to EH&S.

Students:

Student are expected to follow face covering requirements at all times when on campus. If a student is without a face covering in accordance with this policy, a polite verbal request for compliance should be made to educate, encourage, and persuade individuals to wear face coverings. Student do not need to wear a mask when inside a private on-campus residential unit.

If a student refuses to comply with the policy, the state regulations currently requires a student to be sent home. It is not appropriate to notify law enforcement.
Additional training and guidance regarding student enforcement will be available as a part of “Return to School” in the fall of 2020.

Members of the public, and visitors on campus:

The University of Washington is committed to maintaining a respectful, productive, inclusive, and equitable workplace, and discrimination and other conduct that is inconsistent with our values will not be tolerated. If you see someone without a face covering in accordance with this policy, you should not confront them beyond a polite verbal request for compliance to educate, encourage, and persuade individuals to wear face coverings. It is not appropriate to notify law enforcement.

6. RESOURCES

- University’s COVID-19 Prevention Plan
- EH&S Workplace COVID-19 Risk Level and Selection of Personal Protective Equipment
- EH&S Guidance on Facemask use for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 for information on the select, care, and use of face coverings and facemasks
- University Telework policy
- Public Health- Seattle & King County Directive to Wear Face Coverings
- Governor Inslee’s Safe Start plan
- Washington State Labor & Industries Requirements for COVID-19 Prevention in the Workplace