



Face Covering FAQs for Employees

Face covering refers to a disposable mask, cloth face covering, or plexiglass face shield that covers the nose and mouth.

SUMMARY

After careful consideration, the Appointing Authorities determined that face coverings are required inside all Pinellas County government buildings for the safety of employees and citizens as of July 6. This requirement applies to all indoor public places and common areas, but it is not intended for an employee while working alone in their office or cubicle.

Do I have to wear a face covering while at work?

You need to wear a face covering if you are in **indoor common area**. Basically, if you are entering an area that is not your personal space (non-shared office/cubicle), you should wear a face covering. Appropriate use of face coverings is critical to minimize risks to others near you.

EXAMPLES:

- If you are alone in your individual office or cubicle, you DO NOT need to wear your face covering.
- If someone enters your office or cubicle, wear your face covering.
- If you go into a common area, wear your face covering.
- If you are in the breakroom and not eating or drinking, wear your face covering.
- If you are in an indoor common area such as breakroom, hallway, restroom, or elevator, wear your face covering.

If I'm wearing a face covering, do I still have to social distance from others at work?

Yes. Wearing a face covering does not replace the need to practice social distancing, which means remaining at least 6 feet away from other people.

Do I have to wear a face covering if I'm eating or drinking?

No. Social distancing should be practiced at all times. If you are eating or drinking, and therefore not wearing a mask, be sure that you are at least 6 feet from others and replace your mask once finished. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds before and after eating.

What if I don't have a face covering?

- Option 1: Ask your supervisor for disposable masks. The County will provide masks for employee use if needed. Directors can contact Facilities to order masks.
- Option 2: Purchase cloth or disposable masks.
- Option 3: Make one following CDC guidance on fabric, use and cleaning. See [Cloth Face Coverings](#).

What type of face covering is allowed?

- You can wear a disposable mask, cloth face covering (factory-made or hand sewn), or a plexiglass face shield.
- Face coverings are part of your work attire and are subject to the applicable dress code and must not be disruptive to operations.

How does a face covering protect me?

According to the CDC, a face covering may prevent a person who doesn't know they have COVID-19 from spreading potentially infectious respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing, or coughing. If everyone wears a face covering when out in public, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 can be reduced for the community. Since people may spread the virus before experiencing symptoms or without experiencing symptoms, wearing a face covering may protect others. Similarly, face coverings worn by others may protect you from getting the virus. To learn more, see [Considerations for Wearing Cloth Face Coverings](#).

I thought Ordinance 20-14 excluded government buildings from the face covering requirement?

That is correct. [Ordinance 20-14](#) adopted by the Board of County Commissioners did not apply to schools and government buildings. However, the Appointing Authorities determined that face coverings are required to be worn by employees and citizens in indoor public and common spaces inside County government buildings as of July 6.

How can I be sure my cloth face covering is adequate?

When using a cloth face covering, make sure:

- Your mouth and nose are fully covered.
- The covering fits snugly against the sides of your face so there are no gaps.
- You do not have any difficulty breathing.
- The cloth face covering can be tied or otherwise secured to prevent slipping.

Do I have to wash my cloth face covering?

Yes. Wash your cloth face covering after each use in the washing machine or by hand using a bleach solution. Allow it to completely dry.

What if I can't wear a face covering due to medical issues?

You are not required to wear a face covering if you have a medical issue that prevents you from doing so. You may consider other forms of protection such as a plexiglass face shield. If available alternative protective measures do not eliminate the direct threat to self or others posed during the declared COVID-19 pandemic, your Appointing Authority, following CDC guidance, may limit or prohibit your presence in the workplace.

What if I have other questions?

Please consult the COVID-19 resources available at www.pinellascounty.org/hr/coronavirus. If you have questions that aren't addressed here, please talk to your supervisor/manager, or reach out to Human Resources at askHR@pinellascounty.org.