



## FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT POLICY FOR CITY OF MILWAUKEE EMPLOYEES

### DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS Effective July 16, 2020 (Revised 8/2020)

#### BACKGROUND

Common Council File# 200426 creates a requirement for persons in the City of Milwaukee to wear face coverings when in public spaces for the duration of the “Moving Milwaukee Forward” health and safety orders. The ordinance also authorizes the Department of Employee Relations (DER) to establish a face covering requirement policy for all City of Milwaukee employees.

#### POLICY STATEMENT

It is the Policy of the City of Milwaukee, in compliance with Chapter 62-8 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances and as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to require all employees to comply with face covering requirements during the Covid-19 pandemic. Such requirements include a requirement to have possession of a face covering when the person leaves his or her place of residence and wear the face covering whenever the person is in a building open to the public and whenever the person is in an outdoor public space and within 6 feet of any other person who is not a member of that person’s household.

The City is following CDC guidance based on scientific evidence that face coverings help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others for the following reasons:

- Individuals can be contagious before the onset of symptoms. Individuals may be contagious and not know it. By covering their nose and mouth, individuals can help limit the spread of COVID-19.
- Individuals touch their faces less when their faces are covered. Touching one’s face after touching something contaminated with COVID-19 increases the chance of getting sick with COVID-19.

Face coverings for purposes of this Policy means a surgical mask or a cloth face covering that cover the employee’s nose and mouth. Departments shall provide masks or face coverings to employees and employees may also utilize their own personal face masks that comply with the following requirements:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face,
- Fully covers a person’s nose and mouth,
- Include multiple layers of fabric, if cloth face coverings are used,
- Are able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage or change to its shape (cloth only).

#### APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all general city employees as well as civilian employees of the Fire and Police departments. Face covering requirements also apply to the public and elected officials of the City of Milwaukee as well as members of Boards and Commissions, volunteers, contractors, vendors working onsite and students, while in the performance of their responsibilities or obligations.

Compliance with the City's face covering ordinance is also expected by sworn members of the Fire and Police departments. Recognizing the unique needs of public safety personnel and the need for specialized personal protective equipment, this Policy authorizes the Fire and Police departments to develop and implement department specific requirements and expectations for sworn personnel and first responders. Such requirements shall be established and enforced by the respective Chiefs pursuant to applicable regulations and requirements.

The Health Commissioner is also authorized to establish department specific requirements and protocols that ensure compliance with the ordinance.

Visitors to the City Hall complex must also wear face coverings per the City of Milwaukee's MKE Cares Mask Ordinance.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

Each employee shall be required to wear a mask or other cloth face covering that covers his or her mouth and nose while in the workplace. This includes wearing a mask or face covering from the time the employee enters his/her place of employment and at any time the employee leaves his/her work station and moves around or visits common areas (i.e. in hallways and stairwells, copy room, cafeteria, restrooms or break rooms, etc.). This also includes wearing a face covering when entering places where offsite services are being delivered (home visits, residential or commercial inspections, when conducting assessments, etc.) Please note that Hazard Assessments completed by the appropriate Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) personnel may call for Personal Protective Equipment when employees are involved in high risk activities.

In workplace settings where employees are working alone in an open or segregated space (i.e. cubicles with walls, private offices, etc.), when no other person/people are in the same area employees may remove their masks. However, they shall keep them readily available for use when other employees or members of the public enter those spaces.

For employees working in congregate settings or open spaces and another person or people are in the same area (i.e. in cubicles, open communication centers, customer service counters, shared offices, warehouses, or other areas open to other employees or the public, or similar settings), the face covering requirement shall be in effect at all times. Exceptions to this requirement can only be made as a result of a Hazard Assessment finding conducted by the MHD.

Employees working in outdoor workspaces are required to comply with the face covering legislation. In some of those settings surgical masks and face shields can be required as a result of an MHD Hazard Assessment recommendation when performing tasks where social distancing may not be consistently maintained. However, when interacting with members of the public, employees shall wear face coverings at all times.

Employees operating a city vehicle or a personal vehicle on City business shall wear a mask or face covering when other employees or passengers are in those vehicles.

Employees do not need to wear a mask or face covering in the following situations:

- When eating and drinking while maintaining 6-foot distancing
- When stationary outdoors and alone, while maintaining 6-foot distancing, with face covering ready
- When walking or moving outside alone, at least 6 feet away from others, with face covering ready
- When employees work alone in a private office or in a cubicle with walls in an isolated area so long as the employee puts on a face covering when co-workers are working in the same space or if someone enters their office or cubicle

- When alone in a City vehicle that is permanently assigned to the employee and not shared with other employees/passengers
- When interacting with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing who relies on lip reading to communicate
- When the employee's department determines that wearing a face covering while working would create a safety risk to the employee or when a department specific exemption has been created for specific activities or point in time. Please note that departments creating such exemptions need to document the circumstances as they arise and the positions affected.

## **ENFORCEABILITY**

Departmental managers and supervisors are responsible to assist with the communication and education of this policy and must enforce the face covering requirements in accordance with this Policy and City ordinance. An employee who fails to comply with the face covering requirements will receive notice of the requirement, and will be given an immediate opportunity to comply. If the employee does not immediately comply, the employee may be sent home on vacation or accrued leave, other than sick leave, and issued a written warning. If the employee does not comply with the requirement a second time, the City will proceed with disciplinary action.

Employees may refer complaints or concerns regarding compliance with this Policy to the DER HR Compliance Officer by calling 286-6210 or emailing [kholid@milwaukee.gov](mailto:kholid@milwaukee.gov). Employees may also send safety concerns regarding face coverings to [safety1st@milwaukee.gov](mailto:safety1st@milwaukee.gov).

City of Milwaukee employees are expected to adhere to these reasonable and necessary safety requirements in an effort to promote and maintain a safe working environment and prevent as much as possible the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

## **DISABILITY RELATED ACCOMMODATIONS**

The City recognizes that some employees may not be able to wear a face mask due to medical reasons. If an employee believes he or she is unable to comply with the face covering requirement due to a medical reason, the employee may request an accommodation by contacting their departmental Human Resources representative or DER's HR Compliance Officer at 286-6210 and providing a medical note supporting the need for an accommodation. Please note that employees may be sent home on sick leave during the interactive reasonable accommodation process, unless the department determines telecommuting is available and appropriate instead of sick leave.

## **RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS**

The City of Milwaukee reasonably accommodates employees' religious observances, practices and beliefs (including physical appearance or manner of dress with the tenets of their religion). However, the City will not be able to accommodate employees' religious observances, practices and beliefs if the accommodation would cause an undue hardship to the employer. Compromising the safety of the employee or others may be considered an undue hardship.

If an employee is unable to comply with the Face Covering Requirement Policy due to religious beliefs, the employee must immediately notify their departmental personnel officer. The City will engage the employee in an interactive process to determine what the options are and whether there is reasonable accommodation that can be provided.

## **HOW TO WEAR A FACE MASK OR CLOTH FACE COVERING**

Important information about the appropriate way to put on and take off a mask or cloth face covering is presented below:

- Place your mask over your nose and mouth

- Tie it behind your head or use ear loops and make sure it is snug
- Don't touch your mask or cloth face covering while wearing it
- If you accidentally touch your mask or cloth face covering, wash or sanitize your hands
- Remove the mask or cloth face covering by untying or lifting off the ear loops without touching the front of the mask or your face
- Wash or sanitize your hands immediately after removing your mask or cloth face covering
- Regularly wash your cloth face covering with soap and water in the washing machine, (it is fine to launder it with other clothes)

### **CARING AND DISPOSAL OF MASKS OR CLOTH FACE COVERINGS**

Surgical masks should be stored in paper bags for use on successive days. When putting on the mask, make sure the nosepiece is fitted to your nose and the surgical mask is well centered. If you must adjust the mask, sanitize hands and only touch the outside of the surgical mask. When removing the mask, sanitize your hands and follow protocols provided for proper removal and storage. Please follow these steps:

1. Grabbing the straps in the back of the mask and the surgical mask in the front, in one motion pull away from your face.
2. Have an open grocery bag ready to place the surgical mask into.
3. Carefully place the surgical mask face up in the bag, with the straps out away from the mask
4. Mark the date on the bag.
5. Do not reuse the mask until the third day after last use.

Please note that surgical masks may be worn until they are visibly soiled, torn, or have had splashes or sprays on them.

Cloth face coverings should be washed frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily. Employees should have a bag or bin to store cloth face coverings until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash or sanitize your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.

Employees should discard cloth face coverings that:

- No longer cover the nose and mouth
- Have stretched out or damaged ties or straps
- Cannot stay on the face
- Have holes or tears in the fabric