

COVID-19 Face Coverings

Frequently Asked Questions

On July 9, 2020, Governor Beshear signed an executive order mandating the wearing of face coverings in situations described below. The order will go into effect at 5:00 pm on July 10, 2020. It is essential that people continue to practice physical distancing and good hand hygiene even when wearing a face covering — including keeping 6 feet of distance between themselves and others whenever possible. A face covering is one more precaution we can take to help stop the spread of COVID-19, especially by people who have COVID-19 but do not have symptoms.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why it is important to wear a face covering?

Face coverings help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The spread of COVID-19 can be reduced when face coverings are used along with other [preventive measures](#), including [social distancing](#), frequent handwashing, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces. Wearing a face covering will protect people around you, including those at [higher risk of severe illness](#) from COVID-19 and workers who frequently come into close contact with other people (e.g., in stores and restaurants). Face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings. If Kentuckians wear face coverings in all public spaces per the executive order, it can save lives and allow Kentucky's economy to continue to reopen safely.

What is a face covering?

A face covering is material that covers the nose and mouth and is secured to the head with ties, straps or loops over the ears, or is wrapped around the lower face.

A face covering can be made from a variety of materials including cotton, silk or linen, and ideally has two or more layers. Face coverings may be factory-made or homemade.

A face covering with an exhalation valve should not be used as it allows unfiltered exhaled air to escape to others.

Who must wear a face covering?

The executive order requires everyone to wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth when they are in the following situations:

- While inside, or waiting in line to enter, any: retail establishment; grocery store; pharmacy; hair salon/barbershop; nail salon/spa; tattoo parlor; child care facility; restaurant or bar (when not seated and consuming food or beverage); health care setting, or; any other indoor public space in which it is difficult to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet from all individuals who are not members of that person's household;

- While waiting for or riding on public transportation or paratransit, or while riding in a taxi, private car service, or ride-sharing vehicle, or driving any of the above while customers are present, or;
- While in outdoor public spaces in which the person cannot maintain a physical distance of six feet from all individuals who are not members of the person's household and is not otherwise covered by previously issued guidance.

If you live in a facility that has shared kitchens, bathrooms, or other common spaces, wear a face covering when you leave your apartment or room.

People who are sick should wear a face covering while at home if they cannot maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others, and at all times whenever they leave home.

Who is exempt from wearing face coverings?

- Children who are age 5 or younger
 - o Small children are more likely to touch their face covering, so caretakers should wash children's hands or apply hand sanitizer often.
- Any person with disability, or a physical or mental impairment, that prevents them from safely wearing a face covering;
- Any person who is hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication;
- Any person engaged in work that a state or federal regulator has concluded would make wearing a face covering a risk to their health or safety;
- Any person who is seated and actively consuming food or drink at a restaurant, bar, or other establishment that offers food or beverage service;
- Any person who is obtaining a service that requires temporary removal of the face covering in order to perform the service;
- Any person who is required to temporarily remove their face covering to confirm their identity or for security or screening purposes;
- Any person who is giving a speech or broadcast to an audience and is able to maintain a safe distance of six feet from all individuals who are not members of the person's household;
- Any person who is in a swimming pool, lake, or other body of water;
- Any person who is actively engaged in exercise in a gym or indoor facility so long as six or more feet of separation between individuals exists, and where the gym or indoor facility engages in required cleaning;
- Any person who is actively participating in athletic practice, scrimmage, or competition that is permitted under separate Healthy at Work requirements or guidance available online at: <https://healthyatwork.ky.gov>, or;
- Any person engaged in a lawful activity where federal or state law prohibits wearing of a face covering.

I am being treated for a health condition that makes it hard for me to wear a face covering. Do I still need to wear a face covering?

If you are being treated for a health condition that makes you unable to tolerate a face covering, you do not need to wear one. This makes practicing physical distancing and hand hygiene even more essential.

Do I need to wear a face covering when I am exercising?

No, as long as you maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others.

When do workers need to wear a face covering?

Workers must wear a face covering at work if they cannot maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others. You can find additional face covering requirements for your sector on the Healthy At Work website at: healthyatwork.ky.gov. If you believe that there is a difference between the executive order and the Healthy At Work requirements specific to your sector or activity, you should follow the Healthy At Work requirements.

I had COVID-19 and am better now. Do I still need to wear a face covering?

Yes. The requirement to wear a face covering applies even if you had COVID-19.

What type of face covering is better — paper or cloth?

Either a paper or cloth face covering is fine, as long as it covers your nose and mouth. Do not use a face covering with an exhalation valve. Please **do not use health care worker masks, such as N95 or surgical masks**. It is essential that we save health care worker masks for our health care workers.

How often do I need to wash my face covering?

If you are using a cloth face covering, we recommend washing once a day by hand or machine using detergent. The face covering should be fully dry before using. People should have a few face coverings so they can rotate for washing.

For how long can I use a paper face covering?

You can continue to use a paper face covering until it becomes damaged, dirty or wet.

Are there precautions I should take with my face covering?

Using face coverings incorrectly can spread germs. For this reason, it is important to properly wear, store and dispose of face coverings by doing the following:

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, every time you put on and take off your face covering. If you are unable to clean your hands, be very careful not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Do not put face coverings where others can touch them or where germs trapped in your face covering can touch other surfaces, such as counter tops or your kitchen table.

- Do not throw your face covering loose in a bag or backpack. **Keep a plastic bag with you to store your face covering if you will be taking it off when outside your home.**
- Properly dispose of used paper face coverings in the garbage. Do not throw single-use face coverings or disposable gloves on the street.

Is it possible to make my own face covering?

Yes! A face covering can be made from a scarf, bandana or other cloth. See:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>.

What happens if someone violates the executive order?

Any person who does not wear a face covering in one of the required areas (and is not subject to any of the exemptions) shall receive a warning for the first offense, a fine of fifty dollars (\$50) for the second offense, seventy-five dollars (\$75) for the third offense, and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each subsequent offense.

Additionally, if the person is violating this the executive order by attempting to enter a public-facing entity or mode of transportation while not wearing a face covering and not subject to any of the exemptions listed, they shall be denied access to that public-facing entity or mode of transportation.

If a person is already on the premises and violates the executive order by removing a face covering, they shall be denied services and asked to leave the premises, and may be subject to other applicable civil and criminal penalties.

What happens if a business serves customers without a face covering? Or allows employees to work without face coverings?

Any owner, operator or employer of a business or other public-facing entity who violates the executive order by permitting people on the premises who are not subject to any exemption and are not wearing a face covering shall be fined at the following rates: a warning for the first offense, a fine of fifty dollars (\$50) for the second offense, seventy-five dollars (\$75) for the third offense, and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each subsequent offense.

The business may also be subject to an order requiring immediate closure.

How do I report a violation?

To report non-compliance with the face covering requirement, you may call **(833)KYSAFER** or your local health department. You may also choose not to enter an establishment that has practices you believe to be unsafe.

Does my employer have to provide me with a face covering?

Per the executive order, there is no requirement for an employer to provide employees with a face covering.

Do stores have to provide face coverings for customers?

Per the executive order, stores are not required to provide face coverings for customers.

What should I do if a potential customer or visitor shows up without a mask, face shield, or face covering and claims their disability prevents them from wearing a mask, face shield, or face covering?

If a person with a disability cannot wear a mask, face shield or face covering, a place of public accommodation will need to work with that person to seek a reasonable modification to access their services, such as curbside pick-up, delivery, special designated hours, or an appointment by phone or video. A reasonable modification does not include simply allowing a customer inside without a mask, face covering or face shield. However if an accommodation is unable to be determined, a business may refuse entry to anyone that chooses not to or cannot wear a face covering due to an exemption.

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>