

# Face Covering Policy

## Agency Policy #200.002



### Summary Statement

Given the widespread community transmission of COVID-19, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department is committed to the health and safety of our workforce and requires employees and visitors to wear a face covering while in any common area of Department buildings. In addition, employees and volunteers must wear face coverings in any area of the building or property where a physical distance of six feet cannot be achieved.

This policy applies to all Department employees, volunteers and visitors. Employees who do not comply with this or other Department policies are subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from employment.

This policy expires December 31, 2020 unless extended or ended earlier by the Director of Health.

### I. Policy Statement

Our knowledge regarding COVID-19 is rapidly expanding. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a significant portion of people who have COVID-19 don't show symptoms, therefore the virus can spread before people realize they are sick. We wear face coverings to protect the health of others in our community.

This policy is intended to educate, encourage and persuade individuals to wear face coverings to protect the health of others. No member of the public will be denied services solely for refusing to wear a face covering.

The Department will post this expectation on our website and in all public areas of the building and in all common areas used by employees.

The Department expects employees and volunteers to follow public health advice to minimize the spread of COVID-19. This includes:

- Practice physical distancing of six feet when possible.
- Wash hands frequently with warm water and soap for 20 seconds.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Use hand sanitizer.
- Disinfect high-touch surfaces regularly.
- Stay home when you don't feel well. Know the symptoms of COVID-19.

To minimize the spread of respiratory droplets, which contain the COVID-19 virus, the Department also requires face coverings in these situations:

- For employees, volunteers and Department visitors:
  - In common areas.
  - Where six-feet physical distancing is not possible.
- For employees:
  - In group work areas where people are working for more than 10 minutes.
  - Where a consistent six-feet physical distance is not possible between workers.

A face covering is not required for:

1. Children under age two.
2. Children age 2 - 12 unless an adult can supervise to make sure the child uses it safely.
3. People with a disability that makes it hard to wear or remove a face covering.
4. People with difficulty breathing.
5. People who have medical advice that wearing a mask poses a health risk to them.
6. Hearing impaired people who use facial expression and mouth movement to aid in their communication.
7. People communicating with someone who lipreads. In this case people may temporarily remove their masks.

## A. Roles & Responsibilities

**Employee**—Responsible to wear a face covering as directed to protect others. Discuss their situation with Human Resources if they feel they meet criteria for an exemption.

**Supervisor**—Discuss this policy with your team members and make sure team members comply with the policy. Consult with manager on non-compliance.

**Manager**—Provide employee performance coaching and responses as needed to ensure workplace safety.

**Human Resources**—Provide consultation on employee performance management.

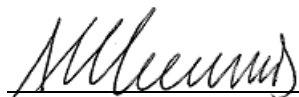
## II. Definitions

**Face Covering**— A mask or protective covering for the face that covers the nose and mouth and is designed to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets. Face coverings may be made of cloth or disposable materials. They are tied or secured around the head.

## III. Supporting Information

<b>Policy Owner</b> Division Director, Communicable Disease	<b>Keywords - searchable</b> COVID-19, face covering, mask.
<b>Procedures for this policy</b> # 200.002A	<b>Related Policies</b> n/a
<b>Relevant Laws and Other Resources</b> Governor's Order 20-25 <a href="#">Stay Home, Stay Healthy</a> .	<b>Revision History</b> First issue.

## IV. Approving Authority



Anthony L-T Chen, MD, MPH, Director  
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

Effective Date