



MEMO

TO: All State Departmental Employees

FROM: Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS)

DATE: April 9, 2020

SUBJECT: Information for State of Missouri departmental team members on use of CDC recommended cloth face coverings for COVID-19

In accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, team members may choose to wear a face covering made of cloth or other similar material when in a public or work setting where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Cloth face coverings offer some degree of protection to the wearer and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.

The cloth face coverings recommended by CDC are not surgical masks (also called facemasks) or respirators (e.g., N-95s), which are types of personal protective equipment (PPE). Cloth face coverings are not considered PPE. Due to a nationwide shortage of surgical masks/facemasks and N-95 respirators, these PPE should be reserved for healthcare workers and others in direct contact with known or suspected COVID-19 patients.

If you are not sure about whether wearing a face covering is appropriate for you in your job duties, speak with your supervisor. Consider pilot testing the use of face coverings to ensure they do not interfere with work assignments.

Face covering use is not a substitute for other recommended public health measures.

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with others – maintain a 6 foot distance from others.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

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If you choose to wear a face covering as recommended by CDC, here are some things to consider:

- Even simple cloth face coverings can make it harder to breathe. All individuals should consider their own health conditions, take care to monitor their own health while wearing a face covering, and consult a doctor with any concerns.
- If you make your own face covering take care not to use materials or excessive layers that restrict breathing ability.
- Properly don (put on) and doff (take off) the face covering to minimize potential for contamination. Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing a face covering. Remove when hand washing or hand sanitizer is available to immediately perform hand hygiene after removing.
- A cloth face covering should fit snugly but comfortably over your mouth and nose and against the side of your face, and be secured with ties or ear loops.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the face covering.
- Label your face covering with your name and do not share face coverings.
- Launder your face covering daily using routine laundry procedures.
- A cloth face covering is not PPE and does not provide a certified protection factor; however, cloth face coverings offer some degree of protection against large infectious droplets, such as mucus or saliva, when speaking, sneezing, or coughing. This particularly protects those around the person wearing the face covering and helps people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Face coverings may also limit the wearer from touching their own mouth and nose.
- If you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while working, you should cease work and notify your supervisor prior to leaving work. If you are not already wearing a face covering and one is available and medically appropriate, consider putting one on as you leave the workplace. Seek medical care as appropriate.

Questions regarding this information should be directed to your agency's HR staff. DHSS will also be available for questions and will issue additional or different guidance or directives as may become necessary.