



TULARE COUNTY
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Timothy W. Lutz, MBA
Agency Director

Karen M. Elliott, MBA • Director • Public Health Branch Director
Karen Haught, MD, MPH • County Health Officer

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Re: Critical Infrastructures and Face Covering Reminder

Dear Business Leaders:

These unprecedented times have been challenging, to say the least. Our county has been required by the State of California to adhere to the Stay at Home Order. In spite of that, we find that many businesses serve essential needs and will remain operating. For the businesses that do not fit into a remote or telecommuting model, it is imperative that they support and encourage all workers to follow all guidelines in protecting themselves from contracting COVID-19 while performing their work in the public.

All workers should follow the protocols of social distancing, wearing a face mask, frequently washing their hands, and staying home if they are displaying any symptoms of being sick. They should not congregate for breaks or meals. Every step they take to protect themselves at work will also keep their family safe when they return home.

As a business owner, it is important to lead by example in protecting your staff and crew. We are all in this together, we encourage you to stay safe. We know that your employee's health is a priority and because of that we want to remind you that face coverings are required. California mandates that face coverings be worn state-wide at all times when outside of the home, including in the workplace. It does not substitute for existing guidance about physical distancing and hand hygiene. **People in California must wear face coverings when they are outside of the home, unless one of the exemptions below applies.**

Individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings in the following specific settings:

- Persons in a car alone or solely with members of their own household.
- Persons who are working in an office or in a room alone.
- Persons who are actively eating or drinking provided that they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet away from persons who are not members of the same household or residence.
- Persons who are outdoors and maintaining at least 6 feet of social distancing from others not in their household. Such persons must have a face covering with them at all times and must put it on if they are within 6 feet of others who are not in their household.
- Persons who are obtaining a service involving the nose or face for which temporary removal of the face covering is necessary to perform the service.
- Workers who are required to wear respiratory protection.
- Persons who are specifically exempted from wearing face coverings by other CDPH guidance.

The following individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings at all times:

- Persons younger than two years old. These very young children must not wear a face covering because of the risk of suffocation.
- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. Such conditions are rare.
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.

Note: Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition who are employed in a job involving regular contact with others must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

Employers must provide face coverings for workers or reimburse them for the reasonable costs of obtaining them. **All face coverings, surgical masks, and respirators must cover the nose and mouth.**

- Wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings, surgical masks, and respirators.
- Wash face coverings after each shift and discard if they no longer cover the nose and mouth, have stretched-out or damaged ties or straps, cannot properly stay on the face, or have holes or tears.
- When removing any face covering, surgical mask, or respirator, do not touch the outside.
- N95 and other tight-fitting respirators must be fit tested to select a model and size that fits the individual and provides a reliable level of protection. At this time, they are reserved primarily for health care workers, first responders, and those exposed to other hazardous particles.

Cloth face coverings are not personal protective equipment (PPE), but combined with physical distancing of at least six feet, they may help prevent infected persons without symptoms from unknowingly spreading COVID-19. If you have questions about face coverings and their use in the workplace please email COVIDBusinessplans@tularehhsa.org or visit the Cal OSHA website at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/General-Industry.html>.

Thank you for your continued support and courage as we continue to navigate this pandemic. We'll continue to persevere the only way we know how – Working Together.

Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency – Public Health Department