Campus Guidance on the Use of Face Coverings

January 25, 2022

Based on current guidance, all individuals, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, must wear an acceptable face covering fitted to cover the wearer’s nose and mouth, at all times when present in UW-Madison indoor public spaces, including when on a campus bus or when two or more people are present in a university vehicle, with the following exceptions:

- When actively eating or drinking.
- When in one’s assigned residential hall room without guests.
- When alone in a private, unshared office or lab.
- When engaged in water-based activities or wet conditions that would result in the mask getting wet.
- Children under the age of 2 years.
- When accommodation is granted by express written permission of the University as determined on an individual basis, considering reasonable accommodations due to a documented medical condition.
- Approval by the Provost of an academic or administrative unit’s request for an exemption for education-related arts performances.
- As permitted by an athletic facility or by varsity athletic conference or association policies, procedures, or rules.

As the order states: indoor public space does not include outdoor space connected to or incorporated within a building or other structure including but not limited to parking ramps, courtyards, patios, and stadiums.
Masks are not required in campus outdoor settings; however, masks may be worn if desired, on the Terrace and other outdoor spaces adjacent to buildings.

As required by federal law, Madison Metro Transit has announced that face coverings must still be worn by all individuals at bus transfer points, shelters and throughout boarding, riding and leaving the bus.

Designated staff in each school, college, or division are able to order COVID-related supplies such as masks from ShopUW+. Check with your school, college, or division to determine who orders and distributes COVID-19-related PPE and supplies for your unit. For more information, consult the [PPE Procurement Guidance](#).

The primary purpose of wearing a reusable cloth or single-use disposable face covering is to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets from the wearer when they talk, cough or sneeze. While not classified as personal protective equipment (PPE), well-fitting cloth and disposable face coverings have also been shown to provide some protection to the wearer from breathing in respiratory droplets and aerosols. The level of protection varies by fit and material.

We will continue to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) such as surgical masks and N-95 respirators to employees who may face potential exposure to COVID-19 or other hazardous substances related to their work. These types of PPE will be reserved for this purpose and they will not be used in lieu of masks for general interaction in campus or public spaces.

The use of a face covering does not make it acceptable for employees to come to work if they are having symptoms or have a documented exposure risk where [quarantine](#) is required. Doing so increases the chances of spreading illness in the workplace.

The use of a face covering is meant to supplement—not replace—[vaccination](#), [testing](#), good hygiene, and self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms which remain the most effective measures to reduce the spread of the virus in the workplace.