University Policy 04-041

Face Covering in Public and Common Settings
During Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Effective beginning Phase 1 – Restricted Return

1. Policy Statement

1.1. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in alignment with the Oregon Governor’s executive orders, and consistent with guidance from the Oregon Health Authority (“OHA”) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), Oregon State University issued its face covering policy on June 3, 2020. It applies to all Oregon State University locations and serves the university’s goal to help reduce the risk and spread of COVID-19. This university policy was last updated on June 3, 2020 and may be revised subsequently to align with federal, state, and local guidance as the public health response evolves.

1.2. OSU requires faculty, staff, students, and visitors across all OSU locations to use face coverings, which include masks, cloth face coverings, or face shields, when in enclosed public and common areas on campus and outdoor areas where physical distancing is not easily maintained, unless an exception is met. Masks and cloth face coverings should be worn in combination with other measures, such as strict physical distancing and proper hand washing.

1.3. When used with standard distancing and hygiene measures, masks and cloth face coverings serve as a central public health measure to reduce the spread of infection across all university settings. Face coverings are particularly important in spaces where physical distancing may be difficult, or when working in enclosed spaces shared by other people, with the exception of immediate family or household members (e.g., partner, child, parents, or roommates).

1.4. “Masks” reference medical-grade paper masks commonly used in clinical settings. Given national shortages, these are largely preserved for medical workers, first responders, and other high-risk settings to protect critical workers.
1.5. While cloth face coverings will not provide full protection for individuals wearing them, those that cover the nose and mouth in ways consistent with health authority guidelines will help prevent the spread of the virus in the community when used in combination with physical distancing (see University Policy 04-040 Physical Distancing During COVID-19 Pandemic) and proper hand washing.

1.6. Section 5 describes general guidelines meant to further articulate the practical application of this policy. Specific circumstances will determine where and when face coverings are warranted.

2. Reason for Policy

2.1. This university policy is issued to contribute to the health and safety of the OSU community during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and to align with federal and state regulations, executive orders, and guidance.

3. Scope & Audience

3.1. This university policy applies to all OSU employees, students, volunteers, visitors, and community members.

4. Definitions

4.1. Face coverings: For the purposes of this policy, a face covering is an item affixed to the face to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, including cloth garments that cover the nose and mouth, medical-grade masks, and face shields.

5. Responsibilities & Procedures

5.1. University settings that will require the use of face coverings

5.1.1. Spaces where physical distancing cannot be met (i.e., hallways, doorways, elevators, stairwells, etc.);

5.1.2. In-person classroom settings;

5.1.3. Student health and counseling centers;

5.1.4. Shared lab spaces, including computer labs;

5.1.5. Dining centers, coffee shops, restaurants, and retail stores;

5.1.6. Common areas within university-owned and -leased buildings;
5.1.7. High-density shared outdoor spaces (e.g., MU Quad, Valley Library Quad, etc.);

5.1.8. Day camps (as warranted, by age categories);

5.1.9. University mass transit or motorpool vehicles with more than one occupant; and,

5.1.10. Other spaces as designated by the Coronavirus Response Coordinator.

5.2. Exceptions to the use of face coverings

5.2.1. Exceptions to this university policy include:

a. Use goes against documented industry best practices for a specific position, or by law or regulation, including the use of standard personal protective equipment (“PPE”) per Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards;

b. When working alone in an enclosed workspace;

c. When exercising in a gym where barriers are provided;

d. When exercising and working outdoors as long as a distance of at least six (6) feet is maintained at all times;

e. When an individual is under the age of two;

f. In situations where face coverings for minors are advised against and not required for participation in youth activities, as per OHA Guidance for School Aged Summertime Day Camps or Specific Guidance for Child Care Sector.

g. When an individual is unable to remove the covering without assistance;

h. Individuals with medical conditions that prohibit them from wearing any face covering; and,

i. Where space can be designed to provide for adequate barriers.

5.2.2. Additional exceptions may be issued on a case-by-case basis by the Coronavirus Response Coordinator, or designee.

5.3. Enforcement

5.3.1. It is prohibited for any individual to be restricted access or participation based on not wearing a face covering, if the individual states that they are aware of this policy and believes they meet an exception to this policy. Individuals who refuse to wear a face covering or alternative in designated university spaces may be referred to remote-only service.
5.3.2. The university will post signage clearly stating face covering requirements, including access to services for faculty, staff, students, and visitors. The university will make face coverings available to those who do not have one.

5.4. Additional Information

5.4.1. OSU’s policy will and may be amended if regulatory conditions change or guidance from health authorities evolves. This may include local or state-level laws or guidance related to business practices (e.g., food service, childcare, etc.).

5.4.2. OSU may transition from a requirement to a recommended use of cloth face coverings based on local conditions and guidance from the CDC, OHA, and local health authorities.

5.4.3. OSU will provide current faculty, staff, and students who are physically present at an OSU location with a cloth face covering (or alternative) as a supplement to their personal supply.

5.4.4. OSU will continue to follow OSHA and industry guidance related to workplace safety (e.g., safe clean protocols for custodial workers, or face coverings indicated for food services workers).

5.4.5. OSU will provide employees alternatives to face coverings, such as face shields, if such alternatives are needed.

5.4.6. Individuals who engage in harassing, discriminatory, bullying, or retaliatory behavior towards those because they are or are not wearing a face covering may be subject to investigation and sanction under other applicable OSU policies.

6. Forms & Tools

6.1. None.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

7.1. COVID-19 FAQs: https://covid.oregonstate.edu/faq

8. Related Information

8.1. OSU COVID-19 Resources and Updates: https://covid.oregonstate.edu/

8.2. University Policy 04-040 Physical Distancing During the COVID-19 Pandemic: https://policy.oregonstate.edu/UPSM/04-040_covid19_social_distancing

9. History


9.2. Housekeeping edits: June 17, 2020

9.3. Last review date: June 17, 2020.

9.4. Next scheduled review date: June 3, 2021.

10. Website

10.1 University Policy 04-041 Face Covering in Public and Common Settings During Response to COVID-19 Pandemic: http://policy.oregonstate.edu/UPSM/04-041_COVID19_face_covering

11. Contacts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Coronavirus Response Coordinator</td>
<td>541-737-0715</td>
<td><a href="https://studentaffairs.oregonstate.edu/">https://studentaffairs.oregonstate.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
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