



# Reopening Guidance FAQs

## Mask and Face Covering Guidance for Business, Transit, and the Public *(Updated 6-10-2020)*

### Q1: Am I required to wear a face covering in public?

It depends on the place. When riding public transit, a person is **required** to wear a cloth, paper or disposable face covering unless that person:

- Is under two years of age
- Has a medical condition that makes it hard to breathe when wearing a face covering
- Has a disability that prevents the individual from wearing a face covering

It is strongly **recommended** that people, including children between 2 and 12 years old, wear a face covering at all times in places like grocery stores or pharmacies, where it might be hard to keep at least six (6) feet apart from other people outside their family and where there are likely to be people at risk for getting sick.

Some businesses may require people to wear a face covering. If so, a business must have policies and procedures that make accommodations for people with disabilities and exceptions for children and people with medical conditions. If businesses require face coverings this **does not** replace the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### Q2: Will a face covering protect me from COVID-19?

Face coverings may reduce the spread of COVID-19. This includes spread from people who have the virus but no symptoms. As Oregon reopens businesses and public spaces, following the guidelines below is more important than ever:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- If you are at higher risk, stay home as much as possible even if you feel well.
- If you become sick while in public, return home, self-isolate, and call your health care provider.
- Wash your hands often.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and objects.

- Cover coughs/sneezes with elbow or tissue.
- Do not touch your [face](#).
- Keep [physical distance](#) - six (6) feet between you and people who you do not live with.
- Avoid overnight trips and travel the minimum distance needed to obtain essential services.

### Q3: When should I use a face covering?

When riding public transit, a person **must** wear a cloth, paper or disposable face covering unless that person:

- Is under two years of age
- Has a medical condition that makes it hard to breathe when wearing a face covering
- Has a disability that prevents the individual from wearing a face covering

It is strongly **recommended** that people, including children between 2 and 12 years old, wear a face covering at all times in places like grocery stores or pharmacies, where it might be hard to keep at least six (6) feet apart from other people outside their family and where there are likely to be people at risk for getting sick.

### Q4: Who should not wear a face covering?

- Children 2 years old and younger.
- Because children between 2 and 12 years old can have trouble wearing a face covering properly (e.g. not touching the face covering, changing the face covering if visibly soiled, risk of problems breathing, etc.) we urge that coverings be worn by children over 2 years old *only* when an adult can help and is closely watching. Face coverings should never be worn by children when sleeping.
- Anyone with a disability that prevents the individual from wearing a face covering.
- Anyone who is deaf or hard of hearing and moves their face and mouth to communicate.
- Anyone who has a medical condition that makes it hard to breathe when wearing a face covering.
- Anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, or unable to remove the face covering without help.

**Q5: What do I say if a potential customer or visitor shows up without a face covering to my business?**

If your business (with the exception of public transit) is requiring face coverings and has posted clear signs as required under the [Mask and Face Covering Guidance](#), you can ask the individual politely if they cannot wear a face covering because of a medical condition or disability. If they answer yes, then you should not require them to wear a face covering. It is not appropriate or allowed to ask an individual what their medical condition is or to make them to provide proof of their medical condition or disability. If they answer no, then consider politely offering them a face covering, provide them with other options (e.g., online shopping) to find what they need, or ask them to come back with a face covering.

**Q6: What barriers may people of color have when wearing face coverings?**

People of color may experience harassment, bias, exclusion or other negative reactions or effects when wearing face coverings. This may be because of racial bias, stereotyping, or discrimination. This discrimination may be against Oregon law. Oregon law does not allow hate or bias crime. A hate or bias *crime* is a criminal act, including offensive physical contact, assault, property damage or threats, that may be motivated by another person's perceived:

- Race,
- Color,
- Disability,
- Religion,
- National origin,
- Sexual orientation, or
- Gender identity.

Bias *incidents* are any hostile expression toward another person, including hate language, mocking, mimicking, exclusion, or discriminatory refusal of service, relating to the other person's perceived protected class (listed above).

A person who experiences a hate or bias crime or incident because of wearing of a mask in public has resources available to help them. To report a **bias crime**, call law enforcement at 911. To report a **bias incident**, call the Oregon Department of Justice at 1-844-924-BIAS (2427). Dial 711 for Oregon Relay. For more information, go to [StandAgainstHate.Oregon.gov](#). To file a civil rights complaint visit Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) [website](#) or call 971-673-0764.

**Q7: Is it illegal to refuse service to someone not wearing a face covering?**

It may be illegal to refuse service to someone because they are not wearing a face covering. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) says that places of public accommodation, such as grocery stores and doctor's offices, must make reasonable modifications to their policies to allow people with disabilities to access

their services. Requiring a face covering might violate the ADA if both of the following are true:

- Requiring a person to wear a face covering makes services inaccessible to people with disabilities, and
- No other options are provided.

If a business chooses to require customers or visitors to wear a face covering, they must:

- Develop a policy and post clear signs about this requirement. A policy that requires customers and visitors to wear face coverings must:
  - Provide exceptions to the policy to accommodate people with certain health conditions, or children under two years of age.
  - Make reasonable modifications to their policy to allow people with disabilities to access their services.
  - Understand that requiring people to wear face coverings affects people differently including people of color who may have heightened concerns about racial profiling and harassment due to wearing face coverings in public.
  - Consider whether to provide face coverings for customers or visitors who do not have one.

**To file a civil rights complaint, visit the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) website or call 971-673-0764.**

**Q8: What barriers may people with disabilities experience when other people wear face coverings?**

- Some people need to see mouth movements or facial expressions to know what you are saying.
- Some people with developmental disabilities or differences can misread or misinterpret facial expressions. A person may have trouble with understanding emotion from tone of voice alone. If you're wearing a mask, they may get cues only from your eyes or eyebrows, which could lead to a and negative interpretation or misunderstanding of the emotion or intent of the speaker.
- Some people who are hard of hearing read lips. Mouth movements and facial expressions can communicate a lot of information.
- Sign language uses the mouth to communicate certain words and meanings. When a face covering blocks a person's mouth, it makes it hard for people using sign language to communicate.

**Q9: How can I communicate well while I wear a face covering so that someone with a disability can understand me?**

Be sure to have a plan to use other communication methods such as:

- Use hand gestures or sign language as appropriate
- Have a notepad and pen ready
- Have printed instructions with pictures and large print
- Have a small dry erase board you can disinfect
- Download a speech-to-text app on your phone

**Q10: Can transparent face coverings help with the above barriers?**

Yes. Solid face coverings may block the ability to see the entire face. People with disabilities may rely on seeing the speaker's face to communicate well and interpret situations.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing are usually in favor of transparent face coverings, like face shields. These coverings can ease communication.

Even when wearing face coverings, OHA still recommends the following:

- Limit social and recreational activities where people cannot stay six (6) feet apart.
- Stay at least six (6) feet from others during necessary trips to grocery stores, pharmacies or health care places.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and throw it away immediately; or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not into your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth or face.
- Clean your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol content) if you cannot wash your hands.
- If you are sick, isolate yourself. Stay away from work, family and friends. Stay away until 72 hours after both fever and cough have gone away without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

You can make transparent, non-FDA approved face coverings at home. You can find a transparent face covering template [here](#).

Please refer to [OHA's Mask and Face Covering Guidance for Business, Transit and the Public](#).

For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide documents in alternate formats such as other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact Mavel Morales at 1-844-882-7889, 711 TTY or [OHA.ADAModifications@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:OHA.ADAModifications@dhsosha.state.or.us).