FACE COVERINGS AND MASKS FOR COVID-19 CONTROL

Guidance, Requirements, and Recommendations on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Limit the Transmission of the COVID-19 Virus.
PURPOSE

The Centers for Disease Control now acknowledge, based on recent studies, that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms and being aware of their illness. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this, the CDC recommends wearing face coverings in public or interpersonal settings.

It is important to emphasize that maintaining 6-feet physical distancing from others remains critical to slowing the spread of the virus. The use of any type of face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing and social distancing (avoiding gatherings). The CDC is advising the use of cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus by those people who may unknowingly have the virus in order to reduce its transmission to others. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators which remain reserved for health care personnel--unless otherwise required for specific duties on the BSU campus.
Ball State Face Covering Guidelines

University Face Mask Policy

Effective July 1, 2020, all people on campus—including faculty, staff, students, vendors, contractors, suppliers, and visitors—should wear face masks (covering nose and mouth) while inside campus buildings.

Face masks are specifically required in the following situations:

- When in the presence of others (indoors or outdoors) and physical distancing is difficult to maintain, such as in hallways, elevators, stairs, public spaces, and common areas;
- When in a classroom or laboratory;
- When using campus transportation (such as a shuttle bus);
- When multiple individuals are in a University vehicle; and
- When it is determined by an employee’s supervisor that wearing a mask is necessary for specific job duties.
Environmental Health and Safety will determine if particular types of face masks are required for particular job settings, and this will be communicated through supervisors.

Wearing a face mask is not required when alone in a private office or work space.

It is important for all to understand—that the wearing of face coverings is designed to protect not the wearer—but to limit the exposure of others in the community from transmission of the virus from the wearer! Failure to wear a face covering endangers others and will contribute to the spread of the infection at the university and in the community.

The use of a face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing—it should be employed whenever possible as a supplemental means of limiting the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
Types of Face Coverings

The effectiveness of the several types of face coverings or masks, and the degree of protection afforded by the different types of cloth face coverings—including materials of construction, thread count, number of layers of material, type of ear or neck ties, closeness of fit to the face—are variable. Nevertheless, any type of face covering is better than nothing at reducing the spread of the viral particles by confining or reducing their emission from breathing, coughing, or sneezing and will provide some benefit in protecting others should you be unknowingly infected and shedding the virus—or have otherwise failed to self-quarantine or self-isolate as advised.

The availability of surgical masks and N95 respirators is largely restricted to health care personnel. This guidance relates to the use of fabric or cloth face coverings.
USE OF CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has prepared guidance on both the construction and use of cloth face coverings as shown here and on their Coronavirus website. Links to that information and other guidance is provided on the REFERENCES slide at the end of this presentation.

These masks are not considered personal protection equipment, or PPE, as their use is to provide some level of protection to others from the wearer and not--for the most part--to protect the wearer from any hazards.
USING A CLOTH FACE COVERING

This simple illustration shows the main procedures and precautions when using a face covering. Of importance is recognizing that if you are in a setting where a face covering is recommended or required--you must assume that its exterior has been contaminated and act accordingly. Do not handle the exposed outside of the face covering, remove it carefully, and immediately wash your hands after removing the mask--then launder and/or store it properly between uses.
BALL STATE CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

Ball State is providing two (2) cloth face masks similar to that pictured to the right to each employee. These should be used and managed carefully to prolong their useful life and to minimize their potentially becoming a source of contamination-rather than a preventive measure.

Other types of face coverings may be made or purchased by staff and will be considered acceptable should these become damaged, misplaced, or otherwise require replacement.
REUSE OF CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

Normally, disposable respirators such as surgical masks and N95 respirators are to be used only once and discarded. An advantage of cloth face coverings is that they may be used a number of times if handled correctly and laundered regularly or when contaminated. They may continue to be reused if they remain in good condition, are not soiled or excessively moist, damaged, or difficult to breathe through, and remain relatively tight to the face.

It is particularly important therefore that these face coverings be used, laundered, and stored carefully to avoid contamination of surfaces or hands.

Adapted from Auburn University RM&S
HANDLING AND STORAGE OF FACE COVERINGS

Temporarily Removing Face Coverings

Face coverings or masks should normally only be removed when eating or alone in a secure location or office.

Any time a face covering or mask is removed, it must be stored in a storage bag or other appropriate location (see storage on next slide);

Do NOT place masks on counters, computers, desks, tables, or any other surface or location. This would allow cross-contamination;

Avoid touching the outer surface while removing the face covering; and,

Perform and hygiene (wash with soap and water or use hand sanitizer) after handling the face covering.
MASK REMOVAL / STORAGE

Keep a paper or cloth bag handy for storing the face covering or mask every time you take it off. An open plastic Ziploc-style baggie or punctured plastic container are alternatives if a paper or fabric bag is not available. Always store a mask in a clean place—never store it in an unprotected purse, backpack, or pocket.

Most Cloth coverings--including flat masks such as surgical-style:

- Carefully remove the mask without touching the outside surface;
- Carefully fold the mask so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage;
- The folded mask can be stored between uses in a clean sealable paper bag. If a plastic bag or container must be used—leave it open to the air;
- Label the paper bag or container with your name; and,
- Perform and hygiene (wash with soap and water or use hand sanitizer) after handling the face covering.
MASK REMOVAL / STORAGE

Cup shaped Cloth coverings or Masks with straps:

- Carefully remove the mask without touching the outside surface;
- Place the face covering in the bag so the outer surface is facing downward;
- Label the bag with your name; and,
- Perform and hygiene (wash with soap and water or use hand sanitizer) after handling the face covering.

EXCEPTIONS TO WEARING FACE COVERINGS

Face coverings should be removed only for eating, when a person is alone in a private office environment where visitors may not unexpectedly enter, when outdoors and maintaining the required physical distance from others, and when a hazard would be presented to the wearer or others if a face covering was being worn.
DISPOSAL OF FACE COVERINGS

The proper and safe disposal of face coverings or masks is necessary in order to prevent cross-contamination to other persons or surfaces:

Normally, a face covering or mask may be placed into a plastic bag or other enclosure, closed, and then deposited in a solid waste (trash) container, wastebasket, dumpster, or roll-off container for disposal; or,

If a face covering is suspected or known to have been heavily contaminated by the COVID-19 virus (caring for a COVID-19 patient, decontamination activities, wearer diagnosed or tested as positive for the infection, etc.) it should be placed into an infectious or biohazard bag or container for pickup and disposal by Ball State Environmental Health and Safety.
RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- CDC do-it-yourself cloth face covering instructions
- A video on how to correctly use a cloth mask
- Mask Wearing 101: How to Use & Re-Use a Face Mask

QUESTIONS?
Contact the Ball State Environmental Health and Safety Office at 5-1110 or by email at orm@bsu.edu if you have any questions on face coverings, the requirements or recommendations in this guidance, or have concerns about COVID-19 precaution.