

Southwestern Oregon Community College

REVISED Temporary Face Covering Policy

Purpose

To provide for the ongoing health and safety of all people on Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC) properties through the implementation of clear expectations for use of face coverings or masks to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Duration: This policy will be in effect until further notice.

Statement

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in alignment with guidance from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as local public health authorities, SWOCC is issuing this revised face covering policy effective August 27, 2021. It applies to all College locations and serves the College's goal to help reduce the risk and spread of COVID-19.

This College policy may be revised to align with federal, state, and local guidance as the public health response evolves.

SWOCC requires all students, employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors, vendors, and community members to wear face coverings at all times in the following situations, in accordance with local public health, OHA, CDC guidelines or OR-OSHA regulations unless impractical due to a physical impairment or disability:

- while indoors (except when alone in a private office),
- in shared spaces (indoor and outdoor) where physical (social) distancing is difficult to maintain,
- In most public outdoor settings, including large outdoor events, where physical distancing is not possible, and regardless of vaccination status.
- in other spaces as designated by the College.

SWOCC will provide face coverings for students, employees and visitors. The College will post signage clearly stating face-covering requirements.

Individuals may wear their own face coverings as long as they meet the definition of an acceptable face covering. See the definition section for clarification on the types of face coverings that are acceptable.

When used with standard distancing and hygiene measures, face coverings serve as a public health measure to reduce the spread of infection across all College settings. Face coverings should be worn in combination with other measures, such as physical distancing and proper hand washing. 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).

In meetings and/or classroom settings, use technology that can help maintain a low risk of virus transmission. Whenever possible:

- Use a microphone while wearing a mask or face covering will amplify your voice while speaking to an audience, allowing more distance between the speaker and the audience, and
- Use Videoconferencing to allow a person to speak to a remote audience and minimize the need for people to be in the same room with a speaker.

Southwestern Oregon Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, national origin, age, disability status, gender identity, or protected veterans in employment, education, or activities as set forth in compliance with federal and state statutes and regulations.

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 [On Campus Social Distancing Procedures](#) for guidelines on social distancing.

SWOCC's policy will 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, labs, etc.). The College 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.

The College will continue to follow OSHA and industry guidance related to workplace safety.

An individual who is not wearing a face covering and states that they are aware of this policy and believes they should be afforded an exception, must meet with the Chief Human Resources Officer or Director Student Disability Services to formalize accommodations. See the Medical or Health Risk Accommodation section of this policy for further information.

Objectives:

This policy states SWOCC's commitment to the health and safety of the SWOCC community during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and is aligned with federal and state regulations, executive orders, and guidance.

Definitions:

- A **Face covering** means a cloth, polypropylene, paper or other face covering that:
 - Completely covers the nose and mouth,
 - Rests snugly above the nose, below the mouth and on the sides of the face,
 - Is secured with ties, ear loops, elastic bands, or other equally effective method,
 - Is capable of being laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape, and
 - Is free of openings, holes, visible gaps in design or material, tears or valves that have the potential to release respiratory droplets

Proper wearing of face covering includes:

- Washing your hands before putting on your face covering.
- Putting it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Trying to fit it snugly against the sides of your face.
- Making sure you can breathe easily.
- Face coverings should be cleaned daily after use.

The following **are not** face coverings because they allow droplets and aerosols to be released and are not acceptable face coverings in SWOCC buildings or on campuses.

- A covering that incorporates a valve that is designed to facilitate easy exhalation, mesh masks, lace masks or other coverings with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents;
- Scarves;
- Bandanas;
- Gators; and
- Face shields are an acceptable alternative only
 - when a person has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask or face covering,
 - when people need to see mouth and tongue motions in order to communicate,

- OR when an individual is speaking to an audience for a short period of time and clear communication is otherwise not possible. A face covering must be worn at all times other than speaking to the audience.
- A **disposable surgical mask** is a disposable face covering approved for health care environments. These are generally reserved for health care workers and emergency responders, but may be used by other individuals as a temporary measure when cloth face coverings are not available.
- A **Face shield** means a clear plastic shield that covers the forehead, extends below the chin and wraps around the sides of the face. Face shields that cover only in front of the user's nose and mouth do not meet the requirements.

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) do not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. Therefore, unless a face shield is coupled with a facemask, it is not considered an acceptable masking practice on our campus, unless allowed under a Medical or Health Risk Accommodation or otherwise indicated in this policy.

- **Common areas** – means building lobbies, reception areas, waiting rooms, restrooms, break rooms, eating areas, smoking areas, locker rooms, bathing areas, transit lounges, conference rooms, or other locations indoors or outdoors that multiple individuals may use or congregate that employers operate or control.
- **Public workplaces** means indoor or outdoor places where people work and gather. Masks, face coverings or face shields are required at all times for employees, contractors and volunteers while **indoors** in public workplaces, including manufacturing facilities, construction sites, warehouses, campus store, trails, athletic facilities and gardens, in addition to hallways, bathrooms, classrooms, elevators, lobbies, break rooms, meeting rooms and other common and shared spaces, unless employees, contractors or volunteers are at a private, individual workspace not shared with other people.

Medical or Health Risk Accommodations:

Individuals with the following situations may request an accommodation to this policy:

- A medical professional has advised that wearing a face covering may pose a health risk to the person wearing the covering or impair their breathing.
- A person has a medical condition, mental health condition, developmental or cognitive condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing, who are unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
- Wearing a face covering would create a safety risk to the person as determined by local, state, or federal regulators, or workplace safety guidelines.
- The person is deaf or hard of hearing and uses facial and mouth movements as part of communication.

While reasonable accommodation for those unable to wear a mask, face covering, or face shield must be provided under applicable state and federal laws, such an accommodation does not include simply exempting individuals from the requirement to wear masks, face coverings, or face shields.

Students who cannot wear face coverings due to medical or health risk conditions should follow the process established by the Accessible Education Office for requesting a reasonable accommodation by contacting Dr. Susan Stuntzner, Director of Accessible Education and Retention Specialist, susan.stuntzner@socc.edu or 541-888-1578.

Employees who cannot wear masks or face coverings due to medical or health risk conditions should reach out directly to Chief Human Resources Officer rachele.lyon@socc.edu or 541-888-7259. Human Resources will assist the employee in submitting a request for reasonable accommodation related to the use of masks or face coverings.

Prohibition of Harassment and Discrimination:

Southwestern Oregon Community College is committed to maintaining a respectful, productive, inclusive, and equitable workplace. Discrimination and other conduct that is inconsistent with our policies will not be tolerated.

Individuals who engage in harassing, discriminatory or retaliatory behavior toward others because they are or are not wearing a face covering may be subject to progressive discipline under applicable College policies and/or collective bargaining agreements.

Enforcement:

In the Workplace:

Employees are expected to comply with the face-covering requirement as a condition of employment, as well as for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues, and the SWOCC community.

Supervisors are required to ensure all of their employees have a thorough understanding of the requirements outlined in this policy. Employees who do not comply should be reminded of the policy by their supervisor and provided additional education and training as needed. If, after additional education and training, employees refuse to comply, contact the Chief Human Resources Officer to initiate the appropriate corrective action. If an employee states they are unable to wear a mask due to a health condition, refer the individual to the Chief Human Resources Officer at 541-888-7259 or rachele.lyon@socc.edu for the reasonable accommodation request process. Employees with concerns that other employees are not complying with face covering requirements should speak with their supervisor, or report it to the Safety Coordinator in Administrative Services at 541-888-7206 or crichards@socc.edu.

Students:

Students are required to follow the face-covering requirement at all times when indoors on campus. If a student is without a face covering, in violation of this policy, begin with a polite verbal request for compliance to educate and persuade the student to wear a face covering. If a student refuses to comply with the policy, the state regulations require the student to be sent home (on or off-campus residence).

Students do not need to wear a face covering when inside a private on-campus residential unit; **however, face coverings are required** in common areas; i.e. Dining Services, Lighthouse Depot, classrooms, Rec Ctr, or the Tutoring Center. Employees with concerns that a student or group of students are not complying with this policy should speak with their supervisor, or report it to the Safety Coordinator in Administrative Services at 541-888-7206 or crichards@socc.edu. Student Athletes shall follow this policy except as outlined by the Northwest Athletic Association and/or the Athletic department guidelines for practice and competition.

Members of the public, vendors and visitors on campus:

Consistent with federal and state public health directives for face coverings, members of the public, vendors and visitors to the College are required to wear face coverings when indoors on campus

If a member of the public, vendor or visitor is not wearing a face covering, the following steps are to be taken:

1. Begin with a polite verbal request for compliance to educate and persuade the individual to wear a face covering. College employees should ask the individual to wear a mask or face covering, or have a supply of disposable facemasks to offer individuals who do not have one. Signs indicating the face covering requirement for all who enter should be clearly posted at all entrances and on websites when possible.
2. If, following a polite verbal request, the individual continues to decline to wear a face covering or facemask, employees should notify their supervisor to assist the individual with determining if accommodations can be made.

3. If the individual refuses to wear a face covering and does not indicate a medical condition or disability that prevents them from wearing a face covering, they should be politely informed that they are not permitted to enter and will be asked to leave. Employees should not attempt to physically block an individual or physically remove them from the space and should avoid confrontation, but should not provide service. Campus Security may be called for help at 541-297-4200.

Resources:

<https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://osha.oregon.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

[SWOCC Re-Opening Plan](#)