

ITD safety standards for employee protection



There are safety standards that should be practiced by everyone, like hand washing and social distancing, and then there are some that are specific to our ITD environment, like vehicle disinfecting.

Face coverings/masks

Here are a few guidelines, based on updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [linked here](#), ITD's stance on the use of face coverings or masks includes the following:

ITD employees should wear cloth face coverings* in these situations:

- When social distancing is not possible, such as riding in a vehicle with another ITD employee (CDC guidelines recommend wearing cloth face coverings to prevent the spread of the corona virus in the community setting where social distancing is not always possible)
- At all times in areas with large numbers of cases of community spread, like Blaine County and Ada County. In these situations, the CDC recommends using simple face coverings like bandanas or homemade masks, not N95 masks.
- When in close proximity to members of the public
- Any time you feel safer doing so

***Cloth face coverings can be fashioned from bandanas, shirts, household items or made at home from common materials at low cost. Our purchasing department is attempting to procure face coverings for distribution to employees. These masks can be used as an additional, voluntary public-health measure.**

This is a supplementary measure due to the nature of the spread of the disease as it is becoming better known and studied. Face coverings are designed solely to prevent spread of the virus from an individual who may not be exhibiting any signs or symptoms of the disease. These facial cloth coverings are not considered Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The most effective disease-prevention strategies in the workplace still include social distancing (i.e., limiting number of employees, at least 6-foot separation), staying home if you are sick, increased ventilation in close spaces (i.e., vehicles, break rooms), cleaning/sanitizing surfaces and vehicles, handwashing with soap and water and not touching the face. All of these control measures are designed to protect the worker from a known health hazard, the corona virus.

PPE in the form of N95 disposable respirators and surgical masks are in limited supply worldwide and should be reserved for those employees in the high risk category of exposure, namely the healthcare workers. They are the only means of protecting them from exposure to positive COVID-19 patients.

ITD has a limited supply of disposable respirators, and with our employee exposure still being classified as low exposure risk by OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Agency), will be

practicing due diligence in the aforementioned engineering and administrative controls to protect our employees from any exposure in the workplace.

ITD has requested that employees do not report to work if they are sick, however, if an employee wishes to wear a cloth face covering at work to prevent potential spread of the virus from them to their coworkers, ITD supports them. ITD is in the process of purchasing face cloths for our employees, but there will be a delay in obtaining them. In the meantime, employees may provide their own face cloth. It is the employee's responsibility to wear them properly as well as maintain and clean the face cloths.

Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission

CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from recent studies that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms and that even those who eventually develop symptoms can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. 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 new evidence, CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining at least 6-foot social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. CDC is additionally advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Cloth Face Coverings: Questions and Answers

This document is intended to address frequently asked questions about cloth face coverings.

Why do you need to wear cloth face coverings?

In light of new data about how COVID-19 spreads, along with evidence of widespread COVID-19 illness in communities across the country, CDC recommends that people wear a cloth face covering to cover their nose and mouth in the community setting. This is to protect people around you if you are infected but do not have symptoms.

When do you need to wear a cloth face covering?

A cloth face covering should be worn whenever people are in a community setting, especially in situations where you may be near people. These settings include grocery stores and pharmacies. These face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing. Cloth face coverings are especially important to wear in public in areas of widespread COVID-19 illness.

Do I still need to stay at least 6 feet away from people if wearing a cloth face covering?

Yes. Wearing cloth face coverings is an additional public health measure people should take to

reduce the spread of COVID-19. CDC still recommends that you stay at least 6 feet away from other people (social distancing), frequent hand cleaning and other everyday preventive actions. A cloth face covering is not intended to protect the wearer, but it may prevent the spread of virus from the wearer to others. This would be especially important if someone is infected but does not have symptoms.

What type of cloth face covering should be worn?

Cloth face coverings can be made from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost.

Who should not wear cloth face coverings?

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children younger than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.

Why is the CDC recommending cloth face coverings instead of medical grade facemasks?

Surgical masks and N95 respirators are in short supply and should be reserved for healthcare workers or other medical first responders, as recommended by CDC guidance.