

**Policy Title:** COVID-19 Face Covering Policy

**Department:** County Manager's Office

**Chapter:** 1

**Section:** 5

**Policy:** 1

**Effective Date:** July XX, 2020

## POLICY STATEMENT

The County is committed to providing a healthy work environment for all employees and our customers and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Home-made cloth coverings or professionally manufactured cloth masks are required in any Ramsey County owned or leased building that is not a congregate care facility. Congregate care facilities have alternative guidance that must be followed. County employees will wear a cloth mask while working with clients, patients, and residents outside of the office setting.

### General Face Covering Guidelines, Process, and Applicability

#### Employees:

All Ramsey County employees are required to wear a face covering in all Ramsey County owned and leased buildings while working indoors and while working outdoors within close contact of other individuals. Ramsey County will provide each employee with two reusable cloth face coverings. Employees may also wear cloth face coverings of their own choosing or clear face shields if they have one. Clear face shields should be used by staff when working with clients who need an accommodation, such as reading lips. Employees may also request a reasonable accommodation to wear a face shield if they are not able to wear the face covering due to a disability. Employees who need clear face shields for purposes of an accommodation should contact their supervisor and submit a request to [Public Health COVID-19 Logistics](#).

**Other Personnel:** All other personnel (including contractors, volunteers, students, and interns), are required to wear face covering while working indoors in Ramsey County spaces and while working outdoors in Ramsey County spaces within close contact of other individuals.

**Visitors:** Visitors are required to wear face coverings and will be provided a reusable or disposable mask if they do not have one. Ramsey County will not turn people away if they do not have a mask. If visitors cannot wear a mask, additional protection will be provided for staff.

**General:** All persons must practice social distancing at all times (that is, staying 6 feet apart from others), including while face masks are being used.

## APPLICABILITY

- All county employees;
- Others (e.g. contractors, volunteers, students, interns) working indoors in Ramsey County spaces or outdoors in Ramsey County spaces within close contact of other individuals; and
- Visitors in all Ramsey County owned and leased buildings.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Wearing a face covering to minimize the spread of COVID-19 **DOES**:

- Help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.
- Help slow the spread of the virus in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Help provide a safe and healthy workplace for all.

Wearing a face covering **DOES NOT**:

- Protect the wearer from others who may spread the virus.
- Replace the need to:
  - wash hands frequently,
  - cover coughs and sneezes,
  - avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth,
  - clean and disinfect surfaces regularly, and
  - practice social distancing by keeping at least 6 feet of space between people.
- Make it safe to leave home when sick.
- Apply to anyone who has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a face mask or who has trouble breathing.

### Where to Wear a Face Covering

- In a work space that is not at least 6 feet from the nearest person.
- Walking through hallways, aisles, stairway and elevators.
- In common areas (like cafeteria, meetings rooms, lobbies, restrooms, etc.).
- Any location encountered during the course of work where social distancing cannot be maintained.

Performing work in the field. Examples include but are not limited to the following business activities:

- Yard waste monitors
- Business inspections
- Staff working in client homes
- Property assessors

- Tax forfeit lands staff
- Probation officers
- Any county vehicles where there is more than one employee

If you are in an office with a door or a workspace that is at least 6 feet from the nearest person, you do not need to wear the face covering while in that space. If someone comes into your office while you are in there, you should put on your face covering.

Even when able to social distance yourself at least 6 feet away, you are required to wear a face covering.

### Use and Care of Face Coverings

- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before putting on your mask.
- Cloth face coverings should—
  - fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
  - be secured with ties or ear loops
  - allow for breathing without restriction
- Wear the covering so that conceals both the mouth and nose areas. The top of the covering should be positioned just below the eyes and the bottom should extend down to cover the chin. [View image of how to wear a face covering.](#)
- Do not rest the mask around your neck or on your forehead.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.
- If you do touch your mask, wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Change the mask when wet, damp or soiled.
- Dirty and clean masks should be handled separately to avoid cross-contamination. Store them in different bags or containers when not being worn or waiting to be cleaned.
- When taking off your mask, do not touch the front. Remove your mask using the loops that go around your ears.
- After removing the mask, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wash the mask after each use. Preferably, wash in hot water with regular detergent and dry completely on hot setting. It can also be hand-washed in warm water and air-dried.
- If you experience symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and call your health care provider. Symptoms include:
  - fever,
  - cough,
  - shortness of breath,
  - chills,
  - headache,

- muscle pain,
- sore throat,
- loss of taste or smell.
- Less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

### Additional Considerations

- a) Cloth face coverings are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE). Most Ramsey County employees do not require PPE in the course of their daily job responsibilities. Staff members who work directly with sick people in health-care settings, COVID-19 respite facilities and in correctional settings receive guidance about personal safety within their work teams.
- b) Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or N95 respirators. N95 respirators are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders. Don't buy or wear N95 masks unless required to do so for your job. Surgical masks may be offered for specific requests but the first preference for County employees will continue to be cloth face coverings to conserve valuable PPE resources.
- c) Ramsey County requires visitors in Ramsey County owned or leased facilities to wear a mask. Masks should not be worn by children under the age of 2 and anyone who has trouble breathing or cannot remove the mask without assistance. Remember to practice social distancing at all times (that is, staying 6 feet apart from others), regardless of whether face masks are being used.
- d) Requests for additional face coverings should be sent to building captains and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, depending upon supplies. Requests for all other PPE should go through PHLogistics.
- e) COVID-19 has brought many disruptions to daily routines and has created a sense of uncertainty. Employees are encouraged to contact the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) for additional support and resources. The program is available 24/7 and all inquiries are confidential. Phone: 866-326-7194

## AUTHORITY

- [Home Rule Charter, Sec. 3.02 - Powers and Duties of the County Manager](#)
- [Administrative Code, Chapter 3.30.00 - Powers and Duties of the County Manager](#)

## DEFINITIONS

Face Covering: Face coverings or “masks” are generally a cloth, bandana or other type of material that covers the mouth and nose. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), face masks should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage or change to shape.

Indoor Setting: Any indoor environment that county employees have the potential to work within 6 feet of coworkers or members of the public that is not a congregate setting. Employees in congregate settings should abide by the policies designated by each congregate setting or facility in accordance with state and federal laws, regulations or guidance.

Close Contact: Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of another person or where it is difficult to maintain 6 feet or more distance.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Department Directors are responsible for designating a “Building Captain” for distribution of masks. Department Directors must ensure all covered individuals in their department are informed of the scope and nature of this policy, and they must make reasonable efforts to train them on this policy as necessary.

All covered individuals are responsible for complying with this policy. Failure to comply with this policy is subject to discipline up to and including termination.

## PROCEDURES

1. Each department director, or their designee, will identify a “Building Captain” (some buildings will have more than one captain). A building’s current Workplace Emergency Coordinator may serve as Building Captain if desired. The role of the Building Captain is to:
  - a. Coordinate and monitor the dissemination of masks to building staff,
  - b. Ensure questions from staff are answered accurately and in a timely fashion, and
  - c. Serve as a point of contact for the public health incident action team for ongoing communication and collaboration related to staff safety at county buildings.
2. Public Health will coordinate the distribution of face coverings and guidance to Building Captains and direct them to the Plato Building to pick up their allotment of face coverings.
3. Building Captains should use the included Sign-out Sheet to record the names of staff receiving face coverings.

4. Each staff person will receive 2 reusable cloth face coverings, with instructions for proper use and care of the face coverings.
5. Questions from staff should be directed to the Building Captain. Questions from building captains should be directed to Jennifer Schreifels, Public Health ICT Safety Officer, at [jennifer.schreifels@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US](mailto:jennifer.schreifels@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US) or 651/266-1209.
6. As new information becomes available related to the use of face coverings or other staff safety issues, it will be communicated to the Building Captain for sharing throughout each county building. It is not the Building Captain's role to monitor the use of cloth face coverings. (Any policy changes will be communicated through a policy update disseminated to all staff.)

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

1. CDC  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
2. Minnesota COVID-19 Response: Stay Safe MN  
<https://mn.gov/covid19/>
3. Minnesota Department of Health: Protecting Yourself and Your Family  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html>
4. Ramsey County: Employee Guidance  
<https://ramseynet.us/content/employee-guidance-wearing-cloth-face-coverings>

## CONTACTS / SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

### Public Health:

Public Health Incident Command Team Safety Officer  
[Jennifer.Schreifels@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:Jennifer.Schreifels@co.ramsey.mn.us) or 651-266-1209

### Public health COVID-19 Logistics:

[PH-ICSCCOVID-19-Logistics@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:PH-ICSCCOVID-19-Logistics@co.ramsey.mn.us)

### Human Resources:

Safety and Occupational Health  
651-266-2929

### Labor Relations:

Labor Relations Manager:  
651-266-2728

### Property Management:

Property Management Manager  
651-266-2262

## REVISION HISTORY

Date	Brief description of change
June 22, 2020	This is a new policy.
July XX, 2020	Revised to strengthen requirements and extend them to visitors.

## APPROVAL

Ryan O'Connor  
County Manager  
July XX, 2020