



JULIE BLAHA
STATE AUDITOR

STATE OF MINNESOTA

OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

SUITE 500
525 PARK STREET
SAINT PAUL, MN 55103-2139

(651) 296-2551 (Voice)
(651) 296-4755 (Fax)
state.auditor@state.mn.us (E-mail)
1-800-627-3529 (Relay Service)

Face Coverings Policy For Visitors and Customers

Effective July 25, 2020

OVERVIEW

Objective

To mitigate, to the extent reasonably possible, the transmission of COVID-19 by visitors and customers of the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) who may be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carriers of the virus through use of face coverings while on OSA premises, as required by Executive Order 20-81.

Policy Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic presents an unprecedented challenge to our State. The virus is highly contagious and potentially deadly. COVID-19 can be spread by people who do not have symptoms and do not know that they are infected.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others. Face coverings are a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), so the use of face coverings is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings.

To mitigate, to the extent reasonably possible, the transmission of respiratory droplets by OSA visitors and customers who may be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carriers of COVID-19, visitors and customers are required to wear face coverings as provided below while on OSA premises.

Visitors and customers who fail to wear a face covering while on OSA premises as required may be requested to leave the premises.

Wearing face coverings is not a substitute for staying home when ill. Visitors and customers should stay home if they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

This policy is subject to change at the OSA’s discretion, including based on public health guidance.

Scope

This policy applies to all visitors and customers while on OSA premises.

Definitions and Key Terms

Terms	Definitions
<i>Face Covering</i>	<p>A paper or disposable mask, a cloth face mask, a scarf, a bandanna, a neck gaiter, or a religious face covering that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fits snugly against the sides of the face;• Covers the nose and mouth completely;• Is secured over the nose and mouth; and• Allows for breathing without restriction. <p>Medical-grade masks and respirators are sufficient face coverings, but to preserve adequate supplies, their purchase and use is discouraged for individuals who do not work in a health care setting or other occupations that require medical-grade protective equipment (e.g., certain construction occupations).</p> <p>Masks that incorporate a valve designed for easy exhaling, mesh masks, or face coverings with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow droplets to be released.</p> <p>Face coverings are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE), are not appropriate substitutes for PPE, and are not intended to be used when individuals need PPE for protection against exposure to hazards.</p>
<i>Social Distance/Social Distancing</i>	Keeping at least 6 feet of distance from other individuals who are not members of the visitor’s or customer’s household.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to visitors or residents when there are in health care settings or other settings where they are required to wear medical-grade or other personal protective equipment (PPE) masks or respirators, rather than face coverings.

This policy does not apply to visitors or students of K-12 or higher education institutions when they must instead comply with face covering and face shield guidance in Executive Order 20-81 or Minnesota Department of Health guidance for schools.

GENERAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

I. Face Covering Requirement

Except as provided in sections II and III below, visitors and customers must wear a face covering while indoors on OSA premises, including when waiting outdoors to enter an indoor space.

When face coverings are required, they must be worn to cover the nose and mouth completely.

Visitors and customers may use OSA-provided face coverings or face coverings they bring from home, so long as the covering meets the standards set forth in the definition of “face covering” above. Visitors and customers are responsible for washing any reusable face covering they use.

In addition to wearing face coverings, visitors and customers should continue social distancing and proper handwashing practices. Wearing face coverings is not a substitute for these public health measures.

II. Temporary Removal of Face Covering

Visitors and customers may temporarily remove face coverings on OSA premises in the following situations:

- When testifying or speaking in situations or settings such as news conferences, legal proceedings, governmental meetings subject to the Open Meeting Law (MS 13D), presentations, or lectures, provided that social distancing is always maintained. Face shields should be considered as an alternative in these situations.
- When eating or drinking, provided social distance is maintained.
- During activities where the face covering will get wet.
- When asked to remove a face covering to verify an identity for lawful purposes.
- When a public safety worker is actively engaged in a public safety role, including but not limited to law enforcement, firefighters, or emergency personnel, in situations where wearing a face covering would seriously interfere with the performance of their public safety responsibilities.
- While communicating with an individual who is deaf or hearing impaired or has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with that individual while wearing a face covering difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent possible.

- When the visitor or customer is alone, including when alone in an office, a room, a cubicle with walls that are higher than face level when social distancing is maintained, or an enclosed work area.

III. Exemptions from Face Covering Requirement

The following individuals are exempt from the face covering requirement:

- Children who are five years old and under.
- Visitors or customers with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to maintain a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals who have a medical condition that compromises their ability to breathe, and individuals who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
 - Visitors and customers unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability must request a reasonable modification. An alternative option, such as a face shield or providing service options that do not require the individual to enter the premises, will be provided when possible.

IV. Consequences of Failing to Wear a Face Covering When Required

Visitors and customers who fail to wear a face covering as required will be offered a face covering and will be requested to wear it to cover the nose and mouth completely. If the visitor or customer still refuses to wear a face covering, is not exempt from the face covering requirement, and is not in a situation in which temporary removal of face coverings is authorized, they will be requested to leave the premises.

In addition, under Executive Order 20-81, individuals who fail to comply with the face covering requirement may receive a petty misdemeanor citation and a fine of up to \$100.