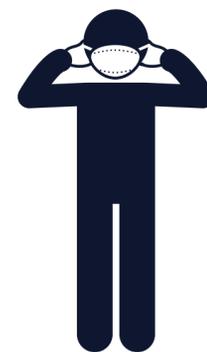


## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Governor Ned Lamont has approved a phased reopening of Connecticut businesses with a mandate that everyone adhere to all social distancing guidelines and wear a face covering when in public, including the workplace. Face coverings are required to be worn at all times. There are limited situations that allow removal, including while working alone within a private office or cubicle with walls; while operating a vehicle alone; or to eat or drink in designated areas while maintaining at least 6ft distance from others.

Outdoors, face coverings should always be worn in public places.



### Face Coverings:

Wearing a face covering can help prevent the spread of infection to others when worn by someone who has virus that causes COVID-19, even if asymptomatic. The mask will reduce release of droplets during breathing, speaking, coughing or sneezing. Face coverings are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE) since they are worn to protect others. Wearing a face covering does not replace physical distancing, practicing good hygiene, and staying home when sick.

Face coverings do not replace job-specific PPE requirements and are not appropriate in some work environments. For example, they should not be worn in environments where the mask may become contaminated by infectious materials or other hazardous substances, if potential for arc flash is present, or if it can be entangled in machinery.



### Donning The Face Cover :

To be effective, face coverings should be worn consistently and correctly so as not to contaminate the hands or face of the user.

- Wash your hands before donning (20 seconds, soap and water)
- Make sure the exterior side is facing out
- Use the ties or ear loops to put your mask on
- Cover the bridge of your nose, your mouth, and secure under chin. Make sure you can breathe easily
- Refrain from touching your face. Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses.
- Avoid touching the front/outside of the mask
- Refrain from eating or drinking while wearing a face cover



### Effective Face Coverings:

- Include fabric, surgical, paper masks , etc.
- Fabric covers include multiple layers of fabric
- Fit snugly against the sides of your face
- Allow breathing without restriction
- Fabric covers can be laundered & machine dried without damage or altering shape



**DO NOT** use masks with exhalation valves! Exhaled breath is released, offering no protection to others.



### Taking Off The Face Cover:

- Wash your hands before removing the mask.
- Use the ties or ear loops to pull your mask off
- Don't touch the front/outside of the mask
- Don't touch the inside of the mask. It may be contaminated from your breathing, coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands again after handling the used mask.



### Maintaining The Face Cover:

- Change when potentially contaminated in order to prevent exposure for the individual wearing it.
- Change when soiled or wet.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed and dried after each use.
- Surgical or paper style face coverings should be disposed of when soiled or wet
- If planned for re-use, store face cover in a clean and dry separate containment area such as a clean paper bag (label with your name )



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## Medical Procedure/Surgical Masks:

A medical face mask is not a respirator. Surgical masks are utilized in surgical, sterile environments, whereas a procedure mask is used by other healthcare providers in clean environments. Like face coverings, this style of mask is loose-fitting and designed to cover the mouth and nose. They are not respirators and do not provide airborne protection.

They are tested by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) for fluid resistance. They only provide protection from contact and large droplets. The procedure to putting on and taking off the mask is similar to the fabric face covering, with the added step of molding the nosepiece when donning



## Filtering Face Piece Respirators (N95s)

Filtering Facepiece Respirators (FFRs), such as the N95 mask, are respirators. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends use of N95's to protect against transmission of small airborne biohazards. Their use must be in conjunction with a functional respirator protection program to ensure adequate selection, use and fit. Without adequate seal of the respirator against the face, these small airborne particulates can easily get through.

Due to shortages, Filtering Facepiece Respirators are prioritized for healthcare providers who are working on the front lines to protect us all, as well as those employees exposed to other hazardous aerosols in the course of their job duties. If you have questions about this respirator, contact UConn EHS or see the UConn Respiratory Protection Program



Photos sourced: FDA/3M/Amazon

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## Resources:

[Governor Ned Lamont: FAQs](#)

[Governor Ned Lamont: Phased Return-To-Work](#)

[CDC: Cloth Face Coverings: Questions and Answers](#)

[CDC: Interim Guidance; How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering](#)

[University of Connecticut: Respiratory Protection Program](#)

[University of Washington: Guidance on Facemask Use](#)