COVID-19 Mask Usage Guidance for Critical Infrastructure Workers and First Responders

Per the current State of Michigan Executive Order any individual able to medically tolerate a face covering must wear a covering over his or her nose and mouth—such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief—when in any enclosed public space. Please see the EHS Face Covering Usage for COVID-19 guidance document for more information. It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-feet social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. Below is guidance regarding work for critical infrastructure workers and first responders that cannot be done >6 feet apart.

As a first approach, EHS recommends cancelling, rescheduling or modifying tasks that require two or more staff in close proximity (<6 feet). For essential tasks where there is no alternative modification, individuals are required to wear a surgical mask, instead of a simple cloth face covering, when performing those tasks. Additionally, face shields should be considered for use when workers cannot consistently maintain three feet of each other.

Surgical masks are tested and cleared by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for protection against large droplets, splashes, sprays, and also protects others from the wearer’s own respiratory emissions. EHS will provide surgical masks for critical infrastructure workers and first responders that have to perform tasks in a way that social distancing > 6 feet cannot be maintained. Face shields are available through Marketsite.

Donning and Use
• Before putting on the mask, wash your hands properly or use hand sanitizer.
• Don the mask by placing the single strap around your head but keeping above your ears and pinching the metal bar on the bridge of your nose.
• Do not touch your face or mask after putting on the mask.
• The mask should cover your nose and mouth.
• If conducting work where the mask may get dirty or dusty, a face shield should be worn to protect the mask.
• For close proximity work, masks should be changed out after 12 hours of use, or if the mask becomes wet, soiled, or compromised in some fashion.

Removal
• Remove the mask carefully, using the strap and avoid touching any part of the mask.
• Place the mask in a paper storage bag for reuse. Mark the bag with your name.
• Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after removing the mask.