



**Face Covering Usage for COVID-19 – Research Areas**  
**Issued 5/18/2020**

Per the current State of Michigan Executive Order (the “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. This guidance has been created specifically for the research enterprise and supersedes any other EHS face covering usage guidance that may be applicable to the university as a whole.

At this time, we interpret the Executive Order to require the use of a face covering when you are (1) indoors in a place other than your home and in an area where you cannot self-isolate (e.g., you cannot close the door and expect other individuals not to come into the room) and (2) with other individuals in the same space or where you are likely to encounter another individual. For example, if you have a single lab space and you can close the door and reasonably expect no other individuals to enter during your entire shift, you need not wear a face covering while you are in such location. However, if you leave your lab space and proceed into a common area or hallway (even if there are no other individuals present), you must wear a face covering. Please note that dry lab work or other, more general office work in your lab office is currently prohibited under Michigan guidelines. Only research activities that require a laboratory setting may proceed in person. Additionally, while face coverings may help to slow the spread of the virus, they should be the last line of defense. Other preventive measures, including social distancing and minimizing the duration of contact time with others, need to be maintained even while wearing a face covering.

As outlined in the Executive Order and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, many types of cloth face coverings are acceptable, including homemade masks, scarves, bandanas, and handkerchiefs, but face coverings that seal as tightly as possible to the face are preferable to those that fit loosely. Individuals can provide their own face coverings if they desire; U-M Office of Research will ensure that all individuals are provided with face coverings.

**Donning and Use of Face Coverings.**

- Each day a newly laundered face covering should be used. See guidance below.
- If you are reusing the face covering during the day, take care to ensure you are using the same side of the covering toward your face.
- Before putting on the face covering, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Don the face covering by securing with ties or ear loops or other means to secure as appropriate.
- Be sure the face covering fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
- Do not touch your face or face covering after putting on the face covering.
- The face covering should cover your nose and mouth.

- If conducting work where the face covering may get dirty or dusty, a face shield should be worn to protect the face covering.
- Face coverings should be changed if they become wet, soiled, or compromised in some fashion.

#### **Removal of Cloth Face coverings**

- Remove the face covering carefully, using the strap or ties. Avoid touching any part of the face covering, except the straps or ties.
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing the face covering.
- Place the face covering in a paper storage bag for reuse. Mark the bag with your name.
- Wash your hands after removing the face covering or use hand sanitizer.

#### **Cleaning Cloth Face coverings**

- Face coverings should be washed daily. Standard laundry detergent is acceptable; no other cleaning agents or disinfectants should be used.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after placing the dirty face covering in the washer.
- Face coverings can be washed with other laundry.
- Use the warmest water setting you can.
- Dry face coverings on the hot cycle.

Additional CDC guidance on the [“Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19”](#) is linked here. This guidance discusses wearing, cleaning and removing face coverings as noted above. This document also has instructions on how to make your own face covering.