



Face Mask Operating Instructions

July 24, 2020

Objective

To the extent reasonably possible, provide guidance for Minnesota State colleges, universities, and system office on balancing the risks for all students, employees and other visitors regarding entering campus-enclosed facilities, including classrooms, offices and other building areas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Policy Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic presents an unprecedented challenge to the State of Minnesota in general and Minnesota State. The virus is highly contagious and potentially deadly. To safeguard the learning environment and the workplace, to the extent reasonably possible, students and employees are required to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and stay home if sick or experiencing symptoms. Employees are required to report to their supervisor if they are sick. Students who are unable to attend class because they are sick or experiencing symptoms should contact the designated campus individual.

Minnesota State colleges, universities, and system office are subject to [Executive Order 20-81](#) including all campus and leased spaces. Nothing in EO 20-81 should be construed to prevent a college or university from developing a policy that imposes more protective requirements with respect to face coverings, consistent with applicable law, than those in the EO or applicable industry guidelines.

Colleges, universities, and the system office will communicate and notice (signage and in written and electronic communications, website) that all persons – including students, employees, contractors and vendors, and visitors – are instructed to wear face coverings as required by Executive Order 20-81.

These operating instructions are subject to change.

Scope

These operating instructions apply to all employees, students and other visitors to campus, including vendors and contractors, who wish to enter campus buildings and other designated confined spaces on campus or the system office.

Required Use of Face Masks or Face Coverings

Consistent with [Executive Order 20-81](#), colleges, universities, and the system office will require all employees, students and visitors to wear face masks or face coverings in all buildings as well as other

designated confined spaces, except in locations or circumstances exempted under EO 20-81. Additionally, face masks or face coverings are required in outdoor areas where social distancing is not possible to maintain. The required face masks/face coverings must cover both the mouth and nasal passages. Masks that incorporate a valve designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow exhaled droplets to be released into the air.

Children under the age of two are entirely exempt from the face mask/face covering requirement. Children under age five, but at least two years old, are strongly encouraged, but not required to wear face mask/face coverings. Colleges, universities, and the system office are required to post clear signage at all regular access points stating that face masks are required in all buildings and designated confined spaces.

Exceptions to the Required Use of Face Masks or Face Coverings; Consequences for Failure or Refusal to Comply

Employees who are unwilling to wear a face mask or face covering in a required area due to the employee's i) religious belief, or ii) disability, as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact the human resources office or such other office that is designated by the college or university to request an accommodation. Employees who refuse to wear a face mask or face covering in a required area, and who are not excused from the requirement, are subject to disciplinary action consistent with the procedures established in the applicable collective bargaining agreement or compensation plan.

Students who are unwilling to wear a face mask or face covering in a required area due to the student's i) religious belief, or ii) disability, as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact an office designated by the college or university to request an accommodation. Students who are unwilling to wear a face mask or face covering in a required area and who are not excused from the requirement may be subject to disciplinary action under the student code of conduct and may be removed from campus.

Students in internships, clinical and other experiential learning settings may have to take additional respiratory precautions based on the specific setting, practice, and host site guidelines and expectations. Failure to follow host-site expectations may impact student eligibility for those internship, clinical, and experiential learning opportunities and may have other program, academic and/or student conduct consequences.

Compliance

Colleges, universities and the system office are required to ensure compliance with the face mask – face covering requirements established in this operating instruction by adopting the following procedures:

- Colleges and universities will direct faculty to ensure compliance with the face mask requirement by all students attending their classes in-person. Students who fail to comply with the face covering requirements will be directed to leave class and report to an office designated by the college or university for this purpose.

- Each college and university will publish a contact number for employees or students to report incidents of non-compliance. Each college and university will ensure that reports of non-compliance that provide credible evidence will be reviewed and initial action taken within one business day of the report.
- Colleges and universities may wish to evaluate whether to establish screening points or check-desks to enforce the face mask/face covering requirement.

Minnesota State Administrators are required to assist in achieving compliance with these face mask/face covering requirements.