

Risk Management Guidance on Mask Use

(effective May 14, 2020 – revised January 18, 2022)

Update effective 1/18/22:

The Omicron variant of COVID-19 is spreading more rapidly throughout the community and recent guidance indicates that upgrading face masks can further mitigate the spread of the virus. For this reason, the City is temporarily updating the mask guidance to require all employees to wear, at minimum, 3-ply, disposable face masks while inside City facilities. Double masking (the use of a disposable mask beneath a cloth face covering) and the use of KN95 masks in high exposure environments is also recommended.

Guidelines:

Indoor Mask Use in City Facilities:

Regardless of vaccination status, all employees and visitors are **required** to wear face coverings indoors unless they are alone in a private office with the door closed. Employees must wear, at minimum, a 3-ply, disposable face mask. Employees are permitted to use their personal supply of disposable masks or they can be obtained from their Department.

Double Masking:

Double masking is layering one mask on top of another. This can provide a better fit and increase filtration which can help to reduce the spread of COVID-19, particularly the Omicron variant. Double masking is not mandatory at this time, but the choice to double mask is supported by Risk Management.

Things to remember when double masking:

1. The disposable mask must be under the cloth mask.
2. You should not double mask with two disposable face masks.
3. **DO NOT** double mask while using a KN95 or N95.

Additional information regarding double masking and instructions to improve the fit of cloth face coverings can be found on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/mask-fit-and-filtration.html>

KN95 Masks:

KN95 masks are a type of filtering face piece/respirator that are commonly made and used in China. KN95 masks will provide additional protection in high exposure environments or for employees with prolonged close contact with people who do not live in the same household. KN95 masks are not mandatory, but employees are permitted to use their personal supply of KN95 masks. The City has some KN95s available for distribution to employees working in high risk environments.

NIOSH – Approved N95 Respirators:

The use of N95 respirators for protection against COVID-19 is not recommended in non-healthcare settings. Only employees in departments with established respiratory protection programs and proper medical clearance are permitted to use N95s. Any employee who chooses to use their personal supply of N95 respirators on a voluntary basis must contact Risk@durhamnc.gov for additional guidance.

Outdoor Mask Use:

Face coverings are not required for any employee while working outdoors unless required post-exposure. All employees are encouraged to wear face coverings when interacting with the public outdoors.

All Other Locations:

City employees must adhere to the face mask requirements set by any retail stores, gas stations, other businesses, private properties, public/private fitness facilities, etc. visited during work hours.

Mask Use in City Vehicles:

All employees are required to wear a 3-ply, disposable face covering while traveling in City vehicles with multiple occupants.

Vaccination Status:

Employees and management should refrain from challenging the vaccination status of visitors or other employees. Employees are encouraged to report their vaccination status to [Human Resources](#).

COVID-19 is still a serious threat to the City of Durham, especially for unvaccinated visitors and staff. Frequent handwashing and social distancing is encouraged and all employees feeling sick or unwell should not come into work or will be sent home immediately.