

## **COVID-19 Face Covering: Recommendations, Guidelines, or Requirements.**

Mask on, mask off, mask required...no it's not. This could be a new Dr. Seuss book. Wondering what to do? We want to reinforce that there are good sources of information about what to do. At times, and with face coverings, there is room for interpretation. If you are seeking a blanket statement or black and white "yes" or "no" you are unlikely to find it. We believe underlying every mask question is the good intention to protect the health of employees and others. Test your research and planning against that standard and you will be on the right track.

**First question:** What does the Center for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) recommend about [face coverings](#) for your industry?

"Remind employees and customers that [CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings](#) in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission. Wearing a cloth face covering, however, does not replace the need to practice social distancing."

**Second question:** What does United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration ([USDOL, OSHA](#)) say about [cloth face coverings](#)?

"Employers have the discretion to determine whether to allow employees to wear cloth face coverings in the workplace based on the specific circumstances present at the work site. For some workers, employers may determine that wearing cloth face coverings presents or exacerbates a hazard. For example, cloth face coverings could become contaminated with chemicals used in the work environment, causing workers to inhale the chemicals that collect on the face covering. Over the duration of a work shift, cloth face coverings might also become damp (from workers breathing) or collect infectious material from the work environment (e.g., droplets of other peoples' infectious respiratory secretions). Workers may also need to use PPE that is incompatible with the use of a cloth face covering (e.g., an N95 filtering facepiece respirator)."

**Third question:** What does your state or local health department say about face coverings?

[State of Oregon – Health Authority](#)

[State of Washington – Health Department](#)

[State of California – Health Department](#)

Unfortunately, this is one of those questions where there will be multiple answers. Again, test your plan against the question, "What will provide the best protection for the health of our employees and others?" and you will be on the right track.

Please let us know if we can help you walk through this analysis or help in any other way.