



REFERENCE FOR CLOTH TYPE MASKS/FACE COVERINGS

A. Background

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are now advising that wearing a cloth face covering in public settings, particularly where other social distancing measures are difficult, cannot hurt and **may** provide some measure of protection to others in the event that the wearer of the mask is contagious for COVID-19 or other respiratory infections. It has been stated that a cloth face covering is not thought to protect the wearer from potential infection, therefore, it is still important to try to maintain the recommended 6-feet of physical distancing even when wearing a face covering.

The information below describes the recommended construction, proper use, and required sanitation of cloth coverings.

NOTE: N95 respiratory and surgical grade masks must be used by healthcare and first responders. Unless otherwise indicated by the appropriate Public Health Authorities in your jurisdictions(s), the general public does not need to wear these types of masks.

B. Cloth Covering Construction

1. There are four main considerations when designing, constructing, and wearing cloth face coverings:

A. Adequate Size

- Cover the nose and mouth to allow for entry of air only through the covering.
- Knit fabrics have some stretch and can be used to make coverings that fit the face snugly without being uncomfortable, many woven fabrics have no stretch.

B. Adequate Filtration

- Use multiple layers of closely knitted (or woven) fabrics.

C. Breathability

- The layered fabrics must be breathable.
- Dense or close weaved fabrics may inhibit adequate airflow and make it harder to breath.

D. Comfort against the skin

- Important especially with the high humidity conditions created by breathing through the covering and the risk of saturation.

- Using a stay dry, wicking fabric on the inside can move the moisture away from the face would make the covering comfortable to wear.

2. There are a variety of different designs and types of face coverings. The CDC has stated that face coverings can be as simple as a scarf wrapped around the nose and mouth, or as formal as a sewn covering similar to a surgical mask. Any of these options will prevent the expelling of droplets while in public.

C. Proper Use of Cloth Coverings

1. The CDC recommends the following for proper use of face coverings:

- fit snugly but comfortably against both sides of the face
- completely covers nose and mouth
- secured with ties or ear loops to minimize movement
- allow for breathing without restriction

2. How to put on a face mask:

- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask.
- Follow the instructions below for the type of mask you are using.
 - Face Mask with Ear loops: Hold the mask by the ear loops. Place a loop around each ear.
 - Face Mask with Ties: Bring the mask to your nose level and place the ties over the crown of your head and secure with a bow.
 - Face Mask with Bands: Hold the mask in your hand with the nosepiece or top of the mask at fingertips, allowing the headbands to hang freely below hands. Bring the mask to your nose level and pull the top strap over your head so that it rests over the crown of your head. Pull the bottom strap over your head so that it rests at the nape of your neck.
- If using a face mask with ties: Take the bottom ties, one in each hand, and secure with a bow at the nape of your neck.
- Pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth and chin.
- Once the mask is secured to your face **DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE OR ADJUST THE MASK!** If you do, you **MUST** wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before touching anything else.

3. How to remove a face mask

- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask. Avoid touching the front of the mask. The front of the mask may be contaminated. Only touch the ear loops/ties/band. Follow the instructions below for the type of mask you are using.
- Before removing the mask or touching ear loops/ties/bands, bend forward slightly at the waist so the mask is away from your body and clothing.
 - Face Mask with Ear loops: Hold both ear loops and gently lift and remove the mask.

- Face Mask with Ties: Untie the bottom bow first then untie the top bow and pull the mask away from you as the ties are loosened.
- Face Mask with Bands: First, lift the bottom strap over your head, then pull the top strap over your head.
- DO NOT SHAKE THE MASK. Any COVID-19 particles on the mask may be distributed into the air, on to your clothes or other hard surfaces and may become a source of contamination.

D. Required Cleaning and Sanitation of Cloth Coverings

1. Cloth coverings are designed to capture droplets expelled when breathing. These droplets deposit and accumulate on the cloth fabrics while in use. It is critical that these soils be remove *daily* to maintain the covering efficiency and prevent the accumulation of microorganisms on the cloth.

A. Machine Washing (Recommended)

- Use hot water setting on machine.
- Use laundry detergent that DOES NOT contain fabric softeners.
- Add an extra rinse cycle as needed.
- Air dry or machine dry on a warm cycle. If machine drying, consider using a mesh bag to prevent damage to elastics or ties.

B. Hand wash

- Use very hot water (>180°F) and ordinary dish washing soap (not lotion/moisturizing soaps).
- Immerse the face covering(s) fully in the water and detergent solution.
- If heavily soiled, add an oxygen cleaner (i.e., Oxyclean™) according to the package instructions.
- Agitate, soak, rinse very well in plenty of water. Squeeze well. Let air dry.

2. Sanitizing during use

A. In between short term uses or if washing a covering is not an option:

- Spray the covering (both inside and out) with either 60% ethyl alcohol, or 70% isopropanol/isopropyl alcohol.
- Make sure all surfaces are damp
- Allow to air dry before reusing

This information is provided as a general guideline and is intended for information only. It is based on learnings around best practices, but this is a rapidly evolving area thus it should be reviewed regularly. All retailers should adapt to their own circumstances, focused on the health and safety of their employees and customers.