

## **Isle of Man Government COVID-19 Guidelines on the Wearing of Face Masks for Public Sector Employees**

### **Introduction**

These guidelines are to advise staff and managers in the Isle of Man Government of the details of the use of face coverings whilst at work and how this will be managed procedurally.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment (RPE), such as face masks.

### **Face Coverings**

Government guidance to the public and businesses on the use of face covering is here: <https://covid19.gov.im/general-information/guidance-on-face-masks/>

Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so, whilst taking all necessary precautions against Covid-19 detailed in <https://covid19.gov.im/>

This includes maintaining social distancing guidelines (2m, or with risk mitigation where 2m is not possible). Simple dust masks designed for larger dust protection or others which are not suitable for example a surgical setting can be used as a face covering.

Similarly, cloth face coverings are not the same as the types of PPE used to manage risks like fine dusts, mists and sprays in an industrial context. Supplies of RPE type PPE, including face masks, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, and those in industrial settings like those exposed to dust hazards, fine mists or sprays.

Face coverings are not a replacement for other ways of managing risk, including social distancing, minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and Government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

Face coverings are mandatory on public transport and in Taxis and are strongly recommended in work vehicles occupied by more than 1 person, or in a pool vehicle.

Employees are also expected to wear face coverings in all public areas and in enclosed spaces where 2m social distance cannot be maintained, including all Government buildings. Employers can impose more stringent conditions in respect of face coverings in the workplace if circumstances warrant it (e.g. healthcare settings).

When wearing a face covering, it is important to use it properly and wash your hands before putting them on and before and after taking them off again as detailed in <https://covid19.gov.im/general-information/guidance-on-face-masks>

### **Key Points**

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and before and after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- Change and wash your face covering daily.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it is not washable, dispose of it carefully (in a bag) in your usual waste.
- Practise social distancing wherever possible.

Please be mindful that the wearing of a face covering may inhibit communication with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

Further advice on the application of this guidance in your workplace can be sought by contacting the Health Safety and Welfare Advisory Service

Contact in the first instance

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**Issued by the Office of Human Resources,  
on behalf of the Cabinet Office  
January 2021**