

Mask Information for BC Public Service Workplaces

Public Service Mask Requirements

Masks are not required when staff are in the workplace. Mask wearing is required for staff when interacting with clients and physical distancing cannot be maintained or there is no physical barrier between staff and a client(s). Staff providing client service field work must wear a mask when indoors and distancing or a barrier is not in place, for example when attending a client's residence. If transporting clients or public in a vehicle, staff must wear a mask, and if possible, all occupants over five years old should wear a mask.

Staff may choose to wear a mask at any time in any area of the workplace (including when at their workstation or when travelling in a vehicle).

Safe Work Procedures

These Safe Work Procedures apply to all staff who are using non-rated procedural masks in the course of their work activities to reduce the risk of exposure to droplet borne viruses.

Note: This procedure does not cover the use of cloth masks, surgical masks, or respirators (e.g., N95s, KN95s, half-face elastomeric air-purifying respirators, etc.). For assistance with the use of that equipment or similar, please submit an [AskMyHR](#) request.

Masks should be constructed of at least 3 layers with a middle filtering layer. Workplace Health and Safety recommends using a non-rated disposable procedural mask that provides a level of filtration but does not have an ASTM rating. ASTM-rated medical masks may be required in some situations. Please submit an [AskMyHR](#) request if you believe your staff may need an ASTM-rated mask.

Appropriate use of non-rated procedural masks:

When worn properly, a person wearing a non-rated procedural mask will reduce the spread of their own infectious respiratory droplets. Non-rated procedural masks should:

- Fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- Be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- Be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment
- Be large enough to cover the nose and mouth completely and comfortably without gaping

Non-rated procedural masks should not:

- Impair vision or interfere with tasks
- Be secured with tape or other inappropriate materials
- Be placed on anyone unable to remove them without assistance or anyone who has trouble breathing

Safe Work Practices

The following safe work practices are a set of methods or "Dos and Do nots" on how to use non-surgical procedural masks:

DO:

- Make sure a mask fits well and doesn't gape at the sides





- Wash hands before putting on and taking off a mask
- Avoid touching a face mask during use
- Wear masks only for a short time
- Change a mask by only touching the straps or ear-loops
- Change a mask as soon as it gets damp or soiled
- Place a used mask directly into a paper bag (for re-use) or a plastic lined garbage bin (for disposal)

DO NOT:

- Don't share a mask with other people
- Don't wear a mask that is damp or soiled
- Don't re-use a mask that is damp, soiled, torn, or crumpled
- Don't touch the face while wearing a mask
- Don't move or adjust a mask while it is being worn
- Don't place a used procedure mask on any work surface, common area or equipment, as there is a potential risk of infection for others

Putting On and Taking Off a Mask

How to put on a procedural mask

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash/sanitize your hands before putting on a mask.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pull at the top and bottom to open the pleats or chamber. With colored or printed side facing out, and the nose wire at the top, put your fingers through the ear loops and position the mask over your nose and mouth. Place the ear loops securely around the ears.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pull the mask from the top and bottom to fully open the folds of the mask and adjust the mask around the face.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gently re-form (do not pinch) the nose wire (if equipped) over the bridge of the nose and make any final adjustment.

How to remove a procedural mask – ear-loop style:

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer with a minimum 60 per cent alcohol base
2. Ensure that you are within easy reach of a brown paper bag or plastic lined garbage bin
3. Reach BEHIND your ears and grasp both ear loops
4. Remove the mask outward from your face by handling only the ear loops
5. Place the mask into the paper bag or lined garbage bin
6. Wash/sanitize your hands

Are You Performing Other Work Activities?

Anyone performing other work activities can review workplace health and safety information or contact a BC PSA Occupational Safety Specialist via [MyHR](#). Refer to the [MyHR BC Public Service Agency](#) (BCPSA) website for further information related to workplace health and well-being.