



Face Covering Requirement for COVID-19 Response

REVISED August 25, 2021

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in alignment with the Oregon Governor's executive orders, and consistent with guidance from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Oregon Tech first issued its face covering policy on June 17, 2020, with revisions on October 19, 2020. This revision incorporates new guidance from the OHA, issued August 25, 2021. It applies to all Oregon Tech locations and serves as one of the steps taken by the university to help reduce the risk and spread of COVID-19.

Oregon Tech requires the use of cloth face coverings, or an appropriate alternative, by all faculty, staff, students and visitors who are physically present at an Oregon Tech location and in enclosed public or common areas. Cloth face coverings, or alternative, are worn in combination with other measures, such as physical distancing and proper hand washing.

Face coverings are required when working in indoors in enclosed spaces shared by others, other than family or household members (*e.g., family, roommates*) regardless of current vaccination status.

Acceptable forms of face coverings include: cloth face coverings or single-use disposable medical-grade masks.

Unacceptable forms of face coverings. Neck gaiters are not acceptable. Mesh masks, lace masks, and other face coverings with openings, valves, holes, vents, or other visible gaps in the design or material are not in compliance with this requirement. Full and half-face shields are not acceptable. Wearing a full-face shield alone without a mask or face covering increases the potential for transmission of viruses to those in the same room as the individual without the mask or face covering. Wearing a full-face shield alone is limited to situations when wearing a mask or face covering is not feasible and the individual has been approved to wear the full-face shield by Access & Campus Equity Services (students), or the Office of Human Resources (staff and faculty). See also Exemptions below.

Classroom settings. Faculty are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering (not a face shield) in the classroom. Exceptions may include approval from the Office of Human Resources (OHR) or if directed by Access & Campus Equity Services (ACES) for a hearing-impaired student. In situations where a face shield is used for teaching, a mask face covering should be used when entering and exiting the classroom, and the faculty member must maintain social distancing and be especially vigilant in enforcing the use of face coverings by the students.

Indoor campus settings that will require the use of face coverings include:

- Spaces where physical distancing cannot be met (i.e., hallways, doorways, elevators, stairwells)
- In-person classroom settings
- Integrated Student Health Center
- Shared lab spaces, computer labs, library
- Market Place Cafe, coffee shops, and bookstore
- Common areas within university buildings (lounges, study nooks, etc.)

- Student Rec Center / gym
- Shared offices; offices serving students or employees

Other campus settings that require the use of face coverings include:

- Outdoor spaces when physical distancing cannot be maintained, especially large events
- Inside university-owned vehicles (regardless of number of occupants)

Exemptions from Face Covering Requirement. Face coverings are mandated of all individuals when indoors on Oregon Tech property and involved in Oregon Tech activities as described in these requirements. Non-compliance with the requirement, irrespective of reason, is not acceptable. Narrow exemptions and modifications to this requirement are outlined below:

- **Exemptions for Infants and Toddlers.** Infants and toddlers under age two (2) should never wear cloth face coverings due to the risk of suffocation. Children age two to four (2-4), with the assistance and close supervision of an adult, are strongly recommended to wear face coverings in settings where it is likely that a distance of at least six feet cannot be maintained from non-household members and those at high risk for more serious illness. All children aged five (5) years and older should wear a face covering unless medically directed to do otherwise.
- **Exemptions or Modifications as a Medical or Health Risk Modification or Accommodation.** Individuals with the following medical conditions or health risks may request an exemption or modification to this requirement:
 - A medical professional has advised that wearing a face covering may pose a health risk to the person wearing the covering or impair their breathing.
 - A person has a medical condition, mental health condition, developmental or cognitive condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing, who are unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
 - Wearing a face covering would create a safety risk to the person as determined by local, state, or federal regulators, or workplace safety guidelines.
 - The person is deaf or hard of hearing and uses facial and mouth movements as part of communication.
- **Exemptions for activities.** The following activities are exempt from wearing face coverings: performances, including but not limited to playing instruments, delivering a speech to an audience, and theater; and practicing or playing a competitive sport at any level.
- **Permissive Use of Full-Face Shields for Special Events.** Wearing a face shield alone is limited to situations when wearing a mask or face covering is not feasible, such as:
 - Live instruction when physical distancing can be consistently maintained and proper ventilation is provided.
 - When people need to see mouth and tongue motions in order to communicate (e.g., for communicating with children in certain developmental stages or people with hearing impairments).
 - When an individual is speaking to an audience for a short period of time and clear communication is otherwise not possible. In this situation it is important to consider:

- Ways to lower risk to the audience including providing a distance of at least 12 feet between the speaker and audience members.
- Having enhanced building ventilation (see CDC’s guidance on ventilation and filtration, Ready Schools, Safe Learners – section 2j, and American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers’ guidance).

Students. Oregon Tech students who believe they may require an exemption from this policy must contact Access & Campus Equity Services (ACES; formerly known as Disability Services). ACES will assess the student’s medical or health risk situation. Such assessments will be conducted on a case-by-case basis.

Employees & Visitors. Oregon Tech employees and visitors may request a medical or health risk accommodation through the Office of Human Resources. Individuals seeking an accommodation may be required to provide medical documentation to assess their request. Such assessments will be conducted on a case-by-case basis

Enforcement.

- A person not wearing a face covering will be asked to put on a face covering or leave campus.
- Individuals who are unable or refuse to wear a face covering or alternative in designated university spaces will be referred to the appropriate office for action (OHR for employees; Student Affairs for students).
- Refusal to comply with these face covering requirements could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination for employees and suspension or expulsion for students.

Additional Information.

- Oregon Tech’s policy will be fluid and adaptive as regulatory conditions change or guidance from health authorities evolves. This may include local- or state-level guidance related to business practices (e.g., food service, campus spaces, etc.).
- Oregon Tech may transition from “required” to “recommended” based on guidance from the CDC, OHA, and local health authorities.
- Oregon Tech will provide members of the university community with a cloth face covering (or alternative) as a supplement to their personal supply.
- Oregon Tech will continue to follow OSHA and industry guidance related to workplace safety (e.g., safe clean protocols for custodial workers, or face coverings indicated for food services workers).
- Oregon Tech will provide alternatives to face coverings, such as face shields, if such alternatives are needed and comply with the most current health and safety guidance.
- Oregon Tech will take a zero-tolerance approach to any acts of bias or discrimination related to the use of face coverings, including acts of public shaming or criticism for individuals not able to wear a face covering or individuals who are complying with the face covering requirements.
- Oregon Tech has the latitude to expand the requirement based on local circumstances (e.g., a campus-based outbreak), in consultation with the policy administrator.

Campus contact regarding this policy: Vice President for Student Affairs; Student.Affairs@oit.edu or 541-885-1013.