

April 6, 2020

CDC Recommends Use of Cloth Face Masks

Human Resources & Employment

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its guidance and on Friday, April 3, 2020, issued a recommendation on the use of cloth face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. This recommendation is a change in CDC's prior guidance regarding the use of face coverings.

In light of the CDC's Recommendation, employers should now consider allowing their employees (other than those required to wear respirators under OSHA guidelines) to wear cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home.

Background

The CDC has stressed that the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the novel coronavirus. The virus spreads mainly from person-to-person – between those in close contact (within about six feet) and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. Studies have suggested that COVID-19 may spread by people who are not showing symptoms of the virus. In fact, the new CDC recommendation states that a “significant portion” of individuals with COVID-19 lack symptoms.

As a result of the new evidence, the CDC now recommends that all persons wear cloth face coverings when they have to go out in public, and particularly where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies). This is especially important in areas of significant community-based transmission.

Continue Social Distancing

The CDC continues to emphasize the critical importance of maintaining 6-foot social distancing to slow to spread of the virus. The recommendation to wear cloth face coverings is *in addition to* its social distancing guidelines and is not a substitute for keeping a 6-foot distance. The use of cloth face coverings is meant to prevent the transmittal of the virus from asymptomatic persons to others.

The masks should not be placed on young children under 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

The CDC has also provided a tutorial on how to create an at-home cloth face mask, which can be found [here](#).