

Avoidance of Infectious Respiratory Disease Spread

Section:	9.9	Effective:	4/7/2020
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Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the County of Berks to make reasonable efforts to provide for the safety and security of its employees. The County of Berks is committed to promoting a healthy and safe work environment for its employees.

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to promote compliance with federal and state recommendations for shrouding the nose and mouth when persons are in congregate environments in order to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Scope Statement:

This policy applies to all employees of the County of Berks. It also applies to visitors entering these spaces.

This policy is in effect until further notice. Enforcement shall begin immediately.

Definitions:

- Mask – a cloth or paper shroud worn to obstruct the mouth and nose. This device is intended to contain potentially infectious spittle that could be aerosolized when coughing, sneezing or speaking. An N95 respirator meets this definition UNLESS the respirator is equipped with an exhalation valve as that device defeats the concept of keeping others safe from the wearer. Please note, before an N95 respirator is worn an employee must demonstrate that they successfully passed the required medical screen and passed a fit test within the last 12 months for the specific N95 respirator that they intend to use.

Actions/Procedures:

General Information:

- A. All employees on county business (whether in county owned/leased facilities or out in the community) will wear a mask covering their nose and mouth at all times.

1. By inference, this policy precludes communal eating and similar activities that would require removal of the mask in congregate settings.

- C. Visitors to county facilities/leaseholds with appropriate justification to be there shall also wear a mask. Members of the public are encouraged to have/wear their own mask. As supplies permit, visitors without a mask will be issued a disposable mask that must be properly worn when in the facility.
- D. Employees working in a single occupancy space (e.g. an office, not a cubicle) and who are reasonably assured they will be working without someone else entering the space (door to the space is closed), are permitted to work without the mask but must don a mask prior to entering a common area or if someone else enters the single occupancy space.
- E. None of the above is intended to alter the need for proper personal hygiene and social distancing.
- F. At the time of issuance of this policy, the County is making efforts to secure cloth masks for employees who do not desire to provide their own. Until such time as adequate supplies are available, employees needing a mask shall be issued a disposable mask. This mask must be maintained and reused as necessary to ensure supplies are managed. Employees who do not preserve their provided mask, and who are unable to supply their own mask, will not be permitted entry to the workplace.
- G. If an employee does not have a mask, they will be denied entry and sent home on unpaid leave, and will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.