



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Face coverings

Updated 16/09/2020

1. Do I have to wear a face covering?

In England, members of the public must by law wear a face covering in a number of settings. The latest information on face coverings can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#when-to-wear-a-face-covering>

The following exemptions to this apply:

- young children under the age of 11
- not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others
- to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you
- to eat or drink, but only if you need to
- to take medication
- if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering

All face coverings should be appropriate and suitable in design.

It should be noted that face coverings are mainly intended to protect others and not the wearer. They are not a replacement for other measures in place to manage the risk of COVID-19 infection such as:

- social distancing
- minimising time spent in contact with others
- high standards of hand hygiene, increased surface cleaning
- use of screens and barriers.

Therefore, you are still required to follow COVID-19 secure measures in place regardless of whether you are wearing a face covering or not.

2. What do I need to consider when wearing a face covering?

A face covering should:

- cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably
- fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face
- be secured to the head with ties or ear loops
- be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton
- ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used)
- unless disposable, it should be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged

When wearing a face covering you should:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on

- avoid wearing on your neck or forehead
- avoid touching the part of the face covering in contact with your mouth and nose, as it could be contaminated with the virus
- change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it

When removing a face covering:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before removing
- only handle the straps, ties or clips
- do not share with someone else to use
- if single-use, dispose of it carefully in a residual waste bin and do not recycle
- if reusable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at the highest temperature appropriate for the fabric
- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser once removed

5. What if a person is not wearing a face covering?

Members of the public are expected to comply with the rules. The legislation places the liability for wearing a face covering with the individual, who is responsible for providing their own face covering.

Should an individual without an exemption refuse to wear a face covering, they can be refused entry. The following approach is helpful when discussing the use of face coverings with members of the public:

- **Engage:** If someone is not wearing a face covering, talk to them immediately.
- **Explain:** Ask if they know about the requirement to wear a face covering, that it is mandatory and intended to protect others against the spread of the virus.
- **Encourage:** By wearing a face covering they can continue within the confines of the show and talk to others whilst maintaining social distancing.
- **Enforcement:** If they refuse to wear a face covering ask them to leave the building. If they refuse and become unreasonable then calling the police is the last resort and they may issue them with a fine.

Ultimately, the police are responsible for ensuring the public comply with the new guidance. The police have the powers to enforce these measures including through issuing a fine.

You should not place yourself at risk at any time and should escalate challenging behaviour in the normal way as per local risk assessments.

Further information on face coverings is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>