

Milwaukee County: Issues Universal Face Mask Policy in county facilities

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Based on the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Milwaukee County is issuing a Universal Face Mask Policy to ensure the health and safety of the community and its employees. Face masks are now required to be worn at all times by employees, contractors, vendors, volunteers, service users and the general public entering county facilities and grounds with a controlled entry point. Face masks are not required, but are highly recommended, at the airport, on buses and at outdoor park spaces including beer gardens. At areas where face masks are required, Milwaukee County is working to make disposable masks available to the public as soon as possible. The County is also working to make disposable masks available on buses for riders who choose to wear one.

“As we continue to deliver critical County services during this unprecedented time, we must do everything in our power to protect the health and safety of both our employees and the public,” said Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley. “In addition to wearing a face mask, we are continuing to encourage staff and patrons to practice physical distancing and handwashing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. These practices become especially important as we begin to re-open County facilities and grounds.”

The Universal Face Mask Policy is an important component of Milwaukee County’s overall COVID-19 risk mitigation and response efforts. Because COVID-19 is transmitted mainly by people interacting in close proximity with each other, wearing a face mask has been shown to decrease the spread of the respiratory droplets that cause COVID-19. Wearing a mask does not eliminate the need to physically distance from each other.

“Wearing a face mask protects you and those around you. We know that you can

transmit COVID-19 even without any infectious symptoms,” said Dr. Ben Weston, Director of Medical Services, Office of Emergency Management. “Because Milwaukee County is an area of significant community-spread transmission, it is a necessary precaution to wear a face mask when at county grounds and facilities.”

Acceptable face masks include cloth face masks, such as handmade and sewn cloth masks, scarves, bandanas, or disposable face masks, such as non-medical grade paper or procedure masks.

Children ages 3 through 12 should only wear a face mask if a parent or guardian is monitoring to make sure it is worn safely. All children 12 years old and under must remain within six feet of their parent or guardian, or household unit, and those who are small enough should be in a stroller or cart. Children ages 2 years-old and younger are exempt from wearing a face mask.

Milwaukee County will provide employees who must work on-site with washable cloth masks, although employees may use their own masks if they choose. Some departments such as healthcare and emergency response have separate face mask policies specific to recommended industry standards. In those cases, individuals will follow industry face mask requirements.

For questions about the Universal Face Mask Policy, visit the Milwaukee County website: <https://county.milwaukee.gov/EN/COVID-19>.