

FACE MASKS



Wearing a face mask, along with practicing social distancing and good hand washing, is one of the best ways you can help stop the spread of COVID-19. The Big Red Restart Plan requires face masks to be worn in all public areas and outside when social distancing cannot be maintained. An in-person educational experience this fall can only happen if everyone works together and takes appropriate measures to keep our Hilltopper community safe and healthy on the Hill.

Why face masks?

Multiple studies have shown that even simple cloth coverings can significantly reduce the spread of vapor particles, which can carry bacteria and viruses, from people's mouths and noses when they talk, cough or sneeze. Think of it this way: When the weather is cold, we can see our breath. That vapor spreads every time we exhale and is projected further when we talk loudly, cough or sneeze. Face masks provide a barrier to keep that vapor flying out toward others.

But will it protect me?

While non-medical face masks will not stop the virus from getting to you, it curbs the spread of the virus from others. If more people follow the guidelines, the better our chances of keeping those around us safe. And the fewer people who become infected, the less likely it is to spread. Wearing a face mask is a show of care and respect for all those around you.

What if someone isn't wearing their mask when they should be?

Face masks are a required element of the Big Red Restart plan. If someone forgets their face mask, replacements will be available from vending machines and departmental offices.

If a student refuses to wear one in class, faculty can have students leave their classroom and they can be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Employees can be reported to supervisors or Department of Human Resources. Anyone on campus not following the protocols can be refused service.

To report compliance concerns, you can also call WKU's Emergency Management Department at 270-745-2019.

What kind of mask should I wear?

Masks come in all shapes, sizes and colors and can be purchased or homemade. Key considerations include fit and comfort, and it should cover the mouth and nose. They should be secured with ties or ear loops, include multiple layers of fabric and allow breathing without restriction.

Please note that face shields will NOT be allowed in place of masks. However, face shields can be worn in addition to masks.

When do I need to wear it?

Wearing a face mask is required at all times when in public areas or shared spaces within buildings, including hallways and classrooms, and in all situations inside or out where social distancing of at least six feet cannot be maintained.

Face masks are required:

- At all times when in public areas or shared spaces within buildings, including hallways and classrooms
- Outdoors when near others where social distancing of at least six feet cannot be maintained
- When in a vehicle with other persons, including cars, vans and buses

When are face masks not required?

There are situations where a face mask is not required or cannot be worn due to the type of activity or factors related to the environment. Examples include:

- While eating or drinking (as long as you can maintain social distancing)
- While in your residence hall room or alone inside a university office (unless you have a visitor)
- In environments where hazards exist that create a greater risk by wearing a mask (engineering bays, biology research & instructional labs, etc.)
- Performing physical exertion, such as manual labor, running and athletics training
- Outdoors with more than six feet continuous separation between all people or there is only brief contact such as passing a person on the sidewalk
- Other physical limitations or conditions that preclude an individual from wearing a face mask

In all cases where a mask cannot be worn and social distancing cannot be maintained, alternative methods must be utilized to limit potential transmission of COVID-19.

How do I care for my face mask?

Cloth masks should be washed regularly, either by hand or machine, at least every other day. Paper or disposable masks should be discarded after each use. Since you will be breathing through these, the cleaner the better.

How do I use it?

Make sure both your nose and mouth are covered. Hold by the ear loops when putting it on or taking it off and avoid touching the main part of the mask itself.

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ON THE HILL** 