

Employee Expectations & Compliance Processes for the use of Face Coverings

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We Wear Because We Care

The health and wellbeing of all students, staff and faculty, guests, and visitors to our campus is the University of Arizona's top priority. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), COVID-19 mainly spreads from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can be inhaled by or land on and infect people nearby. Although it is essential for anyone who is sick or has been exposed to COVID-19 to isolate at home, we now know that people who do not show symptoms of COVID-19 may spread the disease without knowing they are infected.

To limit the spread of COVID-19, the most important public health measures are (i) to maintain physical distancing of 6 feet or more at all times, and (ii) to wear a face covering to provide a barrier that reduces the person-to-person spread of airborne respiratory droplets. Ongoing scientific studies show that consistent wearing of face coverings in public spaces is an effective strategy for slowing COVID-19 infections (see the [CDC guidance](#) on face coverings).

Accordingly, the University has issued an [Administrative Directive](#) requiring the use of face coverings by everyone on our campuses to promote campus health and safety. The University expects the Wildcat community to demonstrate our core values of Compassion and Integrity by universally complying with the face covering directive. All students, employees, and visitors are required to comply with this administrative directive. Student face covering expectations and the compliance process can be found at this [link](#).

We cannot provide excellent teaching, research, service and extension experiences unless all members of the Wildcat community work together to protect each other's health and safety. Each of us is responsible for knowing and following all applicable University guidelines and policies, including the [University Staff Standards of Conduct](#), [Classified Staff Rules of Conduct](#), and [Professional Conduct](#) policies.

Face Coverings

The University will provide two face coverings at no cost to students, staff, and faculty. The University will also provide ongoing communication and education as employees and students return to campus.

If any individual believes their disability or medical condition precludes them from wearing any type of face covering, we encourage them to contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC) to discuss a potential accommodation. DRC staff will explore potential face covering alternatives and other potential arrangements. Should an accommodation be put in place for a student, DRC will confirm the accommodation with the employee's supervisor.

Engagement & Compliance Protocol

All UArizona supervisors, including teaching assistants with supervisory authority, have the responsibility to effectively manage their work environments to achieve compliance with the Administrative Directive on Face Coverings.

It is every UArizona employee's responsibility to comply with this directive without deviation.

Remembering to carry and wear a face covering requires creating new habits, so it is expected that reminders may be needed initially. Supervisors will need to set clear expectations with all employees. Supervisors will review the face covering expectation with every employee and re-iterate why it is important that everyone wear a face covering. For additional information, questions or clarification the supervisor should refer employees to the [Administrative Directive](#) on face coverings.

While disciplinary action for failure to comply with the Administrative Directive will be handled consistent with the University's Performance Management Guidelines, the below outlines possible responses to common issues that may arise.

In situations where non-compliance with the directive is the result of an employee forgetting, losing, or not having a face covering prior to coming on campus or a misunderstanding about when and where face coverings are required (*non-willfull*), we ask that supervisors follow this protocol, as far as needed, to ensure compliance:

***** In cases of addressing non-compliance, the supervisor will need to involve their Human Resources Consultant before presenting any written corrective action documents to employees.**

1. **Issue a first reminder of expectations, as needed.** Politely remind the employee of the need for a properly worn face covering. If necessary and available, the unit supervisor should provide a face covering, or, if face coverings are not readily available, the employee should be instructed to leave and return wearing a face covering. Document your conversation with the employee.
2. **Provide a verbal warning to reinforce expectations, as needed.** If the same employee fails to wear a face covering when and where required after receiving a reminder (but agrees to wear it when reminded), the supervisor should instruct the employee to wear their face covering to cover the nose, mouth and chin. Alert the employee to the conduct policies referenced above and remind the employee that violating these policies could lead to further disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

If the employee complies, document the verbal warning in a follow-up email that follows this standard language:

Subject: Verbal warning on non-compliance with the Face Covering Administrative Directive

Dear _____, Following our conversation earlier today, I am writing to reiterate expectations. As we discussed, the wearing of a face covering is expected in University of Arizona workspaces in order to maintain a safer environment for all employees. Not only were these expectations articulated within the department, it was also reiterated in the required Return to the Workplace training. For additional information, please reference on the University's [Administrative Directive](#) on face coverings.

You have now been observed multiple times without a face covering on at work, most recently at around Y:YY am/pm in the ZZZZ Building on XX/XX/XXXX. Your behavior is putting others at risk. If you are unwilling to wear the face covering in future, you will have to leave campus and may need to report your time as unpaid. If you need time to leave campus to retrieve a face covering, you may use vacation time. Continued unwillingness to wear or bring your face covering may result in corrective action up to and including termination.

If the employee refuses to comply, direct the employee to leave the workspace immediately, and work with your unit's assigned Human Resource consultant on next steps. More information about responding to an employee who willfully refuses to wear a face covering is provided below.

3. **Issue a written warning.** If violations continue, work with your unit' s assigned Human Resources Consultant to issue a written warning with this standard language:

Dear _____, You are being issued this written reprimand for unsatisfactory behavior. You have failed to consistently wear your face covering as required by the University' s Administrative Directive on face coverings. We have discussed this on ___ number of occasions, most recently in an email dated _____, 2020.

4. **Pursue further disciplinary action.** If the employee continues to violate the Directive, continue to work with the assigned Human Resources Consultant if further disciplinary action is required, up to and including termination.

In the case of an employee who *willfully* refuses to properly wear a face covering (regardless of whether the employee has received any prior discipline identified above), the supervisor should ask the employee to leave the work area and immediately contact the department' s Human Resources Consultant. The Human Resources Consultant will work with the employee to evaluate the situation and determine whether discipline is appropriate.

Generally, the University will deal with an employee who willfully refuses to wear a face covering in the same way it deals with employees who willfully refuse to comply with University safety rules or who engage in harmful or dangerous conduct. Unless otherwise prohibited by law, employees refusing to wear a face covering will be asked to leave campus. Any time away from work because an employee refuses to wear a face covering will be unpaid and employees who continue to refuse to comply with the directive may be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.