

Guidance for managers: Mandatory face coverings in indoor workplaces

Coronavirus information, communications and guidance can be located at [LINK](#) and managers should regularly check for updates.

As the infection rate continues to rise, we enter flu season and welcome temporary colleagues to support Christmas peak, it is now mandatory to wear a face covering in all Royal Mail Group indoor workplaces. We also support and encourage the wearing of face coverings whilst outdoors to keep our colleagues and customers safe. However, it is important to note that face coverings do not replace other preventative measures such as increased hand hygiene, social distancing and increased cleaning; these must remain in place.

The introduction of mandatory face coverings in all indoor workplaces enhances existing preventative measures to protect you and others from coronavirus. This forms part of our coronavirus risk assessment, which is required under health and safety legislation. Mandating of face coverings is a view shared by regulatory bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive and many local authorities. We have already seen some excellent examples in the business where people are wearing face coverings indoors and uptake has been good.

We recognise that some people are unable to wear face coverings for medical reasons. It is also acknowledged they are not practical to wear in call centres (where robust social distancing measures are in place) so this task has been exempt from the mandatory requirement. Face coverings and visors (which should be worn with a face covering), are available to staff from their manager. People may also choose to wear their own personal face coverings, but these must not have an exhalation valve.

It is essential to engage staff and talk to them highlighting the importance of wearing face coverings – explaining that they are an additional preventative measure to minimise the risk of infection for colleagues, family, friends and customers.

The introduction of mandatory face coverings is supported by:

- Multi-media communications including RMTv, posters and plasma screens.
- Joint messaging with the CWU.
- Updated Question and Answers document.
- Guidance from SHE Business Partners on how to monitor and manage.
- Advice and Support on 0345 6043657 – providing guidance on wearing of face coverings.
- Updated SMAT templates to include the addition of face covering.
- Policy guidance.

Managers are expected to support the introduction of mandatory face coverings by:

- Demonstrating good leadership by wearing a face covering (unless exempt).
- Delivering the staff brief and checking understanding [LINK](#)
- Regularly monitoring compliance when ‘walking the floor’ – ensuring staff are aware that face coverings have been mandated and why. Reasons include:
 - Increased infection rate.
 - Additional 33,000 colleagues joining Royal Mail.
 - Winter health and flu season.
 - Recommendation from some local health authority unit visits.
- Incorporating face covering checks in their SMATs.

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- Ensuring that posters and plasma screens (where applicable) are clearly visible.
- Promoting the correct wearing and disposal of face coverings.

Policy approach when someone is not wearing a face covering

- Where someone is not wearing a face covering, managers should enquire if they have an exemption. People *do not* need to share the physical or mental health reason for the exemption if they don't want to.
- A person can choose to show an NHS exemption certificate or other evidence if they wish *but do not need* to disclose this. Managers should *not* record or keep lists of people not wearing a face covering.
- Managers and staff should respect and support those who cannot wear a face covering for a physical or mental health reasons.
- Advice and Support on 0345 6043657 can be contacted by managers with questions or concerns related to wearing face coverings.

Managers should be able to respond to local health, safety or environmental enquiries on how they monitor and manage the control measure by sharing the examples of good practice above.