

# Mask Regulations

## Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Shawnee County Health Department all recently changed guidance to recommend use of face masks indoors and when social distancing cannot be maintained in areas of substantial or high rate of transmission (Shawnee County fits this definition). All entities recommend the use face masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19 for all individuals regardless of vaccination status.

## Definitions:

“Mask” means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is simply wrapped around the lower face. A mask or other face covering can be made of [fabric/cloth](#) or can be disposable. It can be factory made or made from household items.

The following are not acceptable masks as of 8/17/20: a face shield; and masks that have a ventilation valve or vent.

“Public space” means any indoor or outdoor space open to members of the public. This means areas where the public is welcome to engage with employees without greater permission and does not include private offices or workspaces (as the public must be invited into these spaces).

“Social distancing,” also called “physical distancing,” means keeping at least 6 feet between yourself and others who are not from your household, except for infrequent or incidental moments of closer proximity.

## Regulations:

1. Students, faculty, staff, and visitors must wear masks while on the Washburn and Washburn Institute of Technology campuses indoors regardless of vaccination status.
  - a. Masks are not required if alone in offices or workspaces.
  - b. Masks are not required if social distancing can be maintained in public gathering spaces but are strongly recommended.
  - c. Employees who work in public spaces may keep their mask off when the public or coworkers are not present, provided there is at least 6 feet distance or adequate time to put the mask on to interact with other persons (except for infrequent or incidental moments of closer proximity).
2. Exceptions from mask requirements:
  - a. Communicating with persons who have a hearing impairment.
  - b. Under special circumstances where social distancing can be maintained consistently, where an approved alternative health and safety plan is in place

- and, where the plan has been approved by all supervisors and the respective area head. Any alternative plan will be published on the COVID website.
- c. Persons speaking or presenting to an audience if more than 10 feet distance can be achieved. (*Per Shawnee County Health Officer Recommendation 7/28/21*)
  - d. Engaging in a class with strenuous physical activity, including athletes who are engaged in organized sports activities, or while exercising at the Rec Center.
  - e. In common areas of residence halls (e.g. hallways and study lounges) as long as individuals can maintain social distance. Roommates and Suitemates are considered a “family” unit, so masks are not required in rooms or suites.
  - f. Working in a setting where masks may increase the risk of heat-related illness or cause safety concerns related to their work as determined by workplace safety guidelines.
  - g. Working in a setting that a regulatory entity or professional association has determined should not be done while wearing a mask.
  - h. While eating or drinking in an appropriately designated location, provided social distancing can be maintained.
  - i. Visitors age ten years and under.
  - j. Participating in any lawful activity during which wearing a mask is prohibited by law.
3. Departments or programs may have more stringent guidelines as approved.
  4. Students, faculty, staff and visitors are required to provide their own masks and are responsible for cleaning their own mask.
    - a. Acceptable masks must meet the definition above, follow [CDC guidelines](#), and fabric/cloth masks should have at least two layers.
    - b. Departments with frequent visitors are encouraged to have disposable masks available to provide visitors if needed.
  5. Individuals who have a disability and may need reasonable accommodations related to the use of masks may contact Teresa Lee at Human Resources at [teresa.lee@washburn.edu](mailto:teresa.lee@washburn.edu) (for employees) or the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, at [diversity.inclusion@washburn.edu](mailto:diversity.inclusion@washburn.edu) (for students) for assistance.
  6. Please review [CDC information](#) on how to wear and clean a mask.

### **Enforcement**

All students, faculty, staff and visitors are expected to adhere to these regulations. In classrooms, faculty have the right to deny a student entry into the room if the student is not wearing a mask. Violations of this regulation by faculty, staff or visitors, including contractors and vendors, should be reported to Human Resources; violations by students should be reported to the Office of Student Life.

Failure to comply with mask requirements may result in discipline according to applicable university policies, ranging from a warning letter to removal from campus. Any sanctions imposed on students, faculty, and staff will consider the facts surrounding the violation and an

individual's non-compliance with this regulation. If there have been previous violations, the type of sanctions or corrective actions taken against the violator shall also be considered.

**Updates to document:**

8/5/20:

- Clarified language in 3.g.

8/17/20:

- Added ventilation valve or vent to list of unacceptable masks
- Added new 5.a. for mask acceptability and requirements.
- Added additional hyperlinks to CDC information.

3/30/21:

- Added an exception 3.h. for residence halls.

5/17/21

- Masks are no longer required inside or outside on campus, in general. Regulations have been revised and renumbered.

8/9/21

- Masks are required for indoors with listed exceptions or when social distancing can be maintained. Regulations have been revised and renumbered.