

## **Human Resources FAQs (VSCS) – UPDATED April 8, 2020**

Please check back frequently as these FAQs will be updated and additional questions and answers will be added as planning for COVID-19 continues. The information below is based upon the information presently known about COVID-19. You are encouraged to check updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Vermont Department of Health (VDH). These FAQs are not intended to cover student workers.

### **1. Are the Colleges closed?**

No. The Colleges are not closed. Although in-person instruction has transitioned to virtual learning for students for the remainder of the semester and students have been asked to return home, if possible, the Colleges remain open and employees are expected to work remotely, if approved to do so, or report for work on campus if they have been deemed essential personnel under Governor Scott's Executive Order and guidance issued by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.<sup>1</sup>

Governor Scott's Executive Orders and related directives and addenda are available at <https://governor.vermont.gov/document-types/executive-orders>

### **2. What should I do if I reside out of state and am required to work on campus?**

You may request a letter from the Director of Human Resources explaining that you have been designated as an essential person for the continuity of operations at your College.

### **3. Do I have to wear a mask if I am working on campus?**

Here's the latest guidance from the VT Department of Health (as of April 8, 2020):

Wear a Cloth Mask – If you need to leave your home for an essential purpose or will be near other people, wear a cloth mask over your mouth and nose. Since COVID-19 may be transmitted by someone who does not have symptoms, a mask helps you protect others. You must still practice social distancing, wash your hands and avoid touching your face.

The Vermont Department of Health advises that cloth face masks should be worn by “Essential workers . . . where they cannot maintain at least 6 feet distance between themselves and others.”

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<sup>1</sup> On March 25, 2020, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development issued FAQs regarding the Governor's Stay Safe/Stay Home order. The FAQs included the following: “**Q. Are colleges required to suspend all in person business?** A. Schools and colleges may continue to offer remote learning opportunities, assuming all instruction does not require in person business to occur at the college (multiple staff or professors in the same room). For colleges that have students living on campus unable to return to a primary residence (international students, vulnerable populations, etc), the college may continue operating as an essential housing provider. This would include providing facilities management, limited food service in accordance with previous Executive Orders, and security services. All CDC and VDH guidance should continue to be adhered to.”

If you are considered an essential worker, are working on campus, and the nature of your job prevents you from maintaining at least six feet of distance between yourself and your co-workers, you should wear a cloth mask. Information from the CDC and the Vermont Department of Health on how to make and wear a cloth mask is attached to these FAQs. If you are unable to make or acquire a suitable cloth mask, you may contact your Director of Human Resources. The Colleges are in the process of procuring face masks.

#### **4. What should I do if I don't feel well?**

If you are feeling unwell and/or showing signs of illness, do not come to work. You should report to your supervisor and to the Director of Human Resources as soon as possible. Employees should follow the recommended guidance issued by the CDC and the Vermont Department of Health. The medical guidance for COVID-19 has evolved over time so please check the following websites for the most up-to-date information:

- CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Vermont Department of Health - <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>
- World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

#### **5. If I am unable to work for any reason, will I still be paid?\*\*\***

If you are a full-time employee and are unable to work because you are sick, caring for someone who is sick, it is not possible to perform your job remotely, you have child care responsibilities that preclude you from working, or for any other reason connected to the COVID-19 virus, you are asked to enter your time as follows.

When requesting to use leave in UltiPro, you can note that your sick leave time or vacation leave time was due to COVID-19. Leave type now includes COVID19-VAC and COVID19-SICK. Please note that your sick leave and vacation buckets will be decreased accordingly. Adding this coding enables you and the VSC to track how much time has been lost due to the COVID-19 virus. Once you have exhausted all leave available to you, the VSC will permit you to run a negative sick leave balance. This will enable you to continue to be paid. The VSCS reserves the right to recoup any outstanding sick leave deficit from the final paycheck if an employee leaves the VSCS before regaining a positive sick time balance but has made no final decision that it will do so.

If you are able to work, either remotely or on campus, and choose not to do so, you will need to seek approval from your supervisor to take leave and you should enter your hours worked or request time off as you would normally, *i.e.* do not use the COVID19-VAC or COVID19-SICK leave types.

**\*\*\*In addition, please see the accompanying updated VSCS Guidance on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).**

#### **6. Do I need a doctor's note if I stay home because I am sick?**

The usual practice of requiring doctor's notes is temporarily suspended to avoid overwhelming the medical system and you are not required to obtain a doctor's note recommending that you

stay home or releasing you back to work, unless specifically asked to do so by your HR Director. Once the virus is under control, the normal practice will resume.

**7. Will the cost of a COVID-19 test be covered by the VSC health plan?**

Yes – see CIGNA’s COVID-19 resource page at <https://www.cigna.com/coronavirus/>

CIGNA states that:

- Through May 31, 2020, we will waive customers’ out-of-pocket costs for COVID-19 testing-related visits with in-network providers, whether at a doctor’s office, urgent care clinic, emergency room, or by virtual care options such as talking with a doctor or clinician 24/7 by phone, tablet, or computer
- Through May 31, 2020, we will make it easier for customers with immunosuppression, chronic conditions or who are experiencing transportation challenges to be treated virtually by in-network physicians with those capabilities.
- We will ensure delivery of your medications – there is no need to order refills earlier than usual, or to stock up
- We are available at any time to answer your calls, provide support, and assist your providers
- If you have general questions about your benefit and coverage, call 1 (855) 287-8400
- If you need help coping with loss, stress, or other issues related to the impact of COVID-19, call 1 (866) 912-1687

**8. What resources are available to help me cope with the emotional impact of COVID-19?**

The VSCS’s Employee Assistance Program is available through CIGNA. It covers all employees and their families, even if you are not covered by the VSC’s health insurance. To access EAP benefits, call 1-800-554-6931. Log in to <https://my.cigna.com/web/public/guest> and use Employer ID “vsc” for initial registration. It is confidential and provided to employees at no cost.

## Using Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

If you need to leave your home, wear a cloth face covering.

The Health Department recommends that all Vermonters wear cloth face coverings when outside of the home to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This advice is based on new data about how COVID-19 can spread before a person has any symptoms. A mask helps protect others around you if you are infected and don't know it.

A face covering is one more precaution we can take to help slow the spread of COVID-19 – and is **not a substitute for physical distancing and other prevention measures**. You still need to stay at least 6 feet away from people, even when wearing a face covering.

The cloth face coverings recommended are **not** surgical masks or N-95 respirators. These types of masks are critical supplies that must be reserved for our health care workers and first responders. Please make your own face coverings with household items (see more on the back).



Examples of when to wear a face covering	Examples of when you don't need to wear a face covering
Trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, doctor or hospital	Going for a walk in the woods or in your neighborhood. But bring one in case you encounter other people and stop to chat
Essential workers at a grocery store, pharmacy, or other business setting where they cannot maintain at least 6 feet distance between themselves and others	At home, if everyone in the home isn't showing symptoms
At home if you are sick and have other people in the house	Going for a run on the bike path, if it's not too crowded
Home care workers caring for vulnerable populations	Who should never wear a mask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children under the age of 2</li> <li>• anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious</li> <li>• anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance</li> </ul>
Riding the bus, taxi, or ride share	
Walking on a busy and crowded street	

## What is a face covering?

A face covering is any well-secured cloth (like a bandana or scarf) that covers your mouth and nose.

## Why are you recommending this now?

There is a lot we are still learning about COVID-19. However, there is increased evidence that people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus, and that droplets produced when breathing, speaking, or clearing your throat may spread COVID-19 from person-to-person. We continue to think staying home and practicing physical distancing and good hand hygiene are the most important ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. By recommending that Vermonters use a face covering, we are adding one more action to help reduce the spread.

## How to wear a cloth face covering:

Cloth face coverings should —

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
- be secured with ties or ear loops.
- include multiple layers of fabric.
- allow for breathing without restriction.
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.



## Clean cloth face coverings daily, by hand or machine, using detergent.

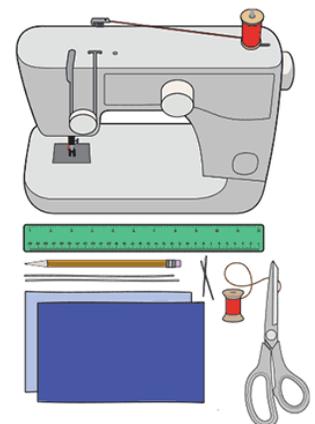
A washing machine should suffice to properly wash a cloth face covering. Make sure it's completely dry before using. You should have a few on hand so you can rotate for washing.

## Remove and store it properly and safely.

- Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth when removing it.
- Immediately wash your hands after removing it.
- Don't put it where others can touch it or on counter tops or tables.

## Make your own.

CDC has [instructions on making your own coverings](#) in several different methods, including machine or hand-sewn, a no-sew method with a t-shirt and scissors, and a no-sew method with a bandana.



For more information, visit [www.healthvermont.gov/COVID-19](http://www.healthvermont.gov/COVID-19).

# Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

## How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings

Cloth face coverings should—

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

## CDC on Homemade Cloth Face Coverings

CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.

CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

## Should cloth face coverings be washed or otherwise cleaned regularly? How regularly?

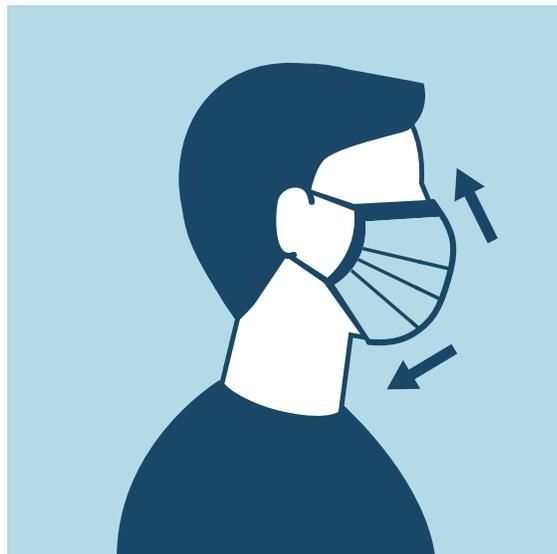
Yes. They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use.

## How does one safely sterilize/clean a cloth face covering?

A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a cloth face covering.

## How does one safely remove a used cloth face covering?

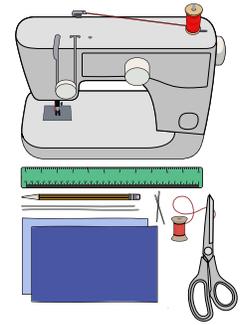
Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their cloth face covering and wash hands immediately after removing.



# Sewn Cloth Face Covering

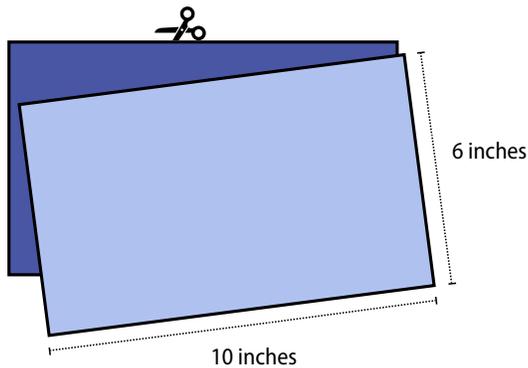
## Materials

- Two 10"x6" rectangles of cotton fabric
- Two 6" pieces of elastic (or rubber bands, string, cloth strips, or hair ties)
- Needle and thread (or bobby pin)
- Scissors
- Sewing machine

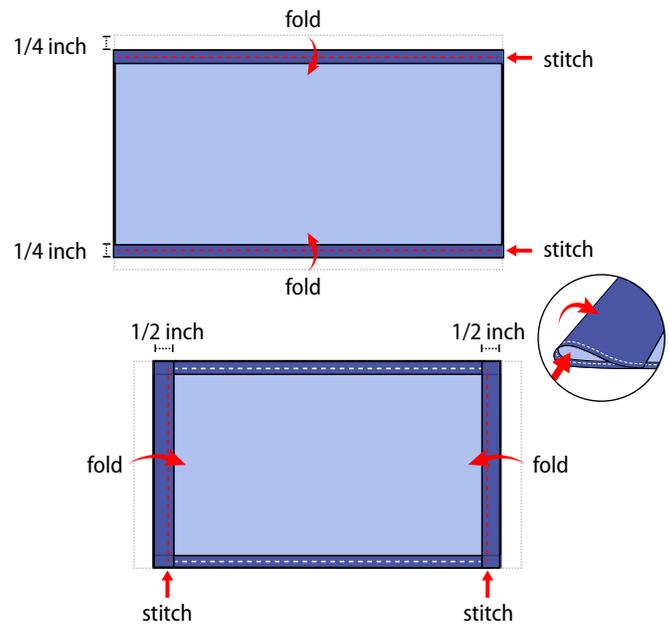


## Tutorial

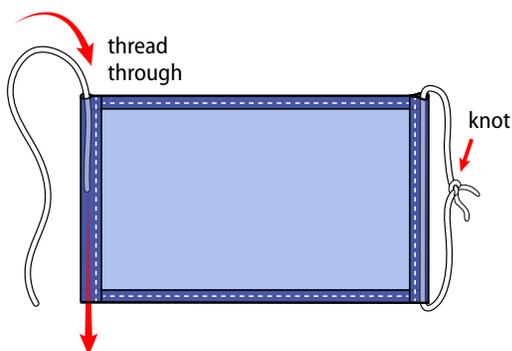
1. Cut out two 10-by-6-inch rectangles of cotton fabric. Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets. T-shirt fabric will work in a pinch. Stack the two rectangles; you will sew the cloth face covering as if it was a single piece of fabric.



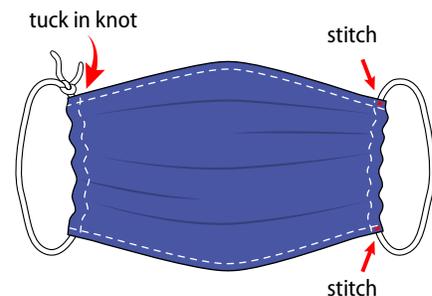
2. Fold over the long sides  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch and hem. Then fold the double layer of fabric over  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch along the short sides and stitch down.



3. Run a 6-inch length of  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch wide elastic through the wider hem on each side of the cloth face covering. These will be the ear loops. Use a large needle or a bobby pin to thread it through. Tie the ends tight. Don't have elastic? Use hair ties or elastic head bands. If you only have string, you can make the ties longer and tie the cloth face covering behind your head.



4. Gently pull on the elastic so that the knots are tucked inside the hem. Gather the sides of the cloth face covering on the elastic and adjust so the cloth face covering fits your face. Then securely stitch the elastic in place to keep it from slipping.

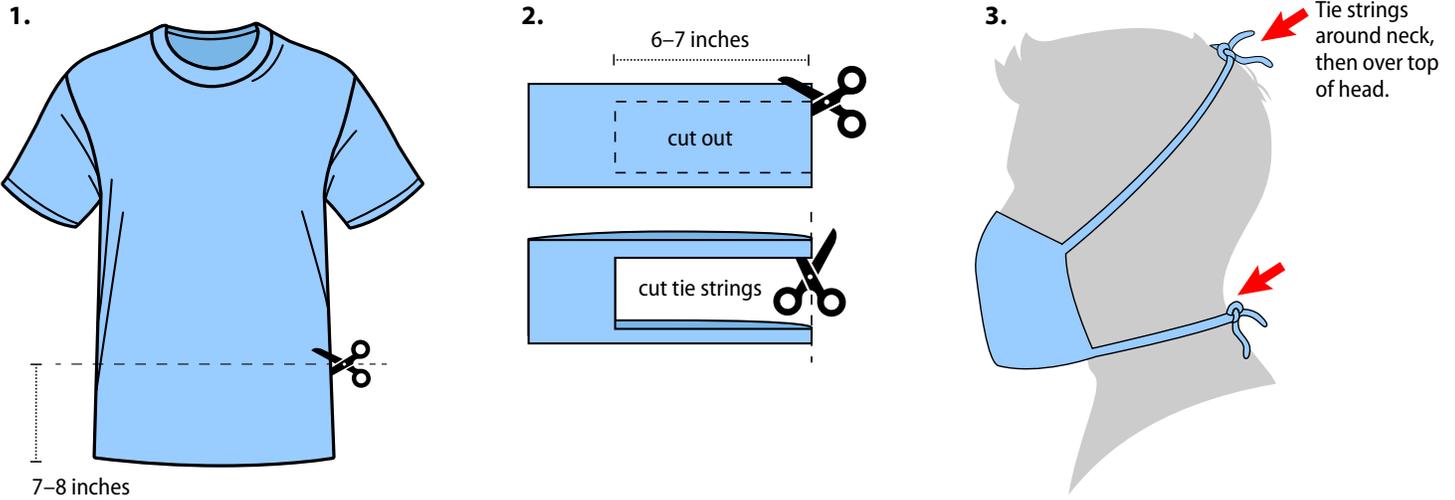


# Quick Cut T-shirt Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

## Materials

- T-shirt
- Scissors

## Tutorial



# Bandana Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

## Materials

- Bandana (or square cotton cloth approximately 20"x20")
- Coffee filter
- Rubber bands (or hair ties)
- Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)

## Tutorial

