



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON DC

5 April 20

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MAJCOM-FOA-DRU/CC  
DISTRIBUTION C

FROM: AF/A1

SUBJECT: Department of the Air Force Guidance on Use of Cloth Face Coverings

References: (a) Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Department of Defense Guidance on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings", 5 April 2020  
(b) Air Force Surgeon General Memorandum, "Medical Guidance on 3D Printed N-95 Respirators, Face Masks, and N-95 Mask Shields/Covers", 1 April 2020  
(c) AFI 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel*, 7 February 2020  
(d) AFI 10-2519, *Public Health Emergencies and Incidents of Public Health Concern*, 10 December 2019  
(e) CS316353B, Center for Disease Control Face Covering Fact Sheet, 4 April 20

This memorandum is issued pursuant to References a and b relating to the use of cloth face coverings to prevent the spread of illness.

The Department of the Air Force is committed to taking every precaution to ensure the health and well-being of our military members, civilian employees, and their families in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. DAF supports, and will continue to implement, all measures necessary to mitigate risks to the spread of the disease.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Military personnel, civilian employees, their family members, and contractors are strongly encouraged to follow CDC guidelines on the use of cloth face coverings. When using 3D fabricated Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE), they also should follow the Air Force Surgeon General's guidance as provided in Reference b.

Effective immediately per the Secretary of Defense's direction in Reference a, to the extent practical without significantly impacting mission, all individuals on DoD property, installations, and facilities are required to wear cloth face coverings when they cannot maintain six feet of physical distance in public areas or work centers (does not include or apply to a service member/family member's personal residence on a military installation). This includes all:

- Total Force Military Personnel
- DoD Civilian Employees (including Non-Appropriated Funded Civilians) – subject to the conditions set out below
- Family Members
- DoD Contractors
- All other individuals on DoD property, installations, and facilities

In addition to this guidance memorandum, wing commanders and equivalents should refer to References c and d on their authority to require protective items when safety considerations make it appropriate and to follow the HPCON framework to respond to a public health emergency or incident of public health concern. Commanders should determine the appropriate personal protective equipment required for protection based on the mode of transmission of the disease in question.

Since current conditions make it appropriate, commanders must ensure units adhere to five elements of military professional standards: neatness, cleanliness, safety, uniformity, and military image. Commanders will ensure face coverings worn by uniformed military members are conservative, professional, and in keeping with dignity and respect. Any cloth items worn as face coverings (i.e., neck gaiters, neck warmers, balaclavas, etc.) should be functional, cleaned, and maintained in compliance with current Air Force instructions and should cover the mouth and nose. As safety is the primary concern, until issued items are fully available Commanders and units may deviate in regard to uniformity while maintaining other standards. Once available, members will cease use of personal items and only wear the issued face covering when in uniform.

For civilian employees (Appropriated Fund and NAF), use of a cloth face covering is strongly encouraged. Commanders who wish to mandate cloth face covering for civilian employees under this memo must either furnish them or provide a uniform allowance per AFI 36-128, *Pay Setting and Allowances*, 17 May 2019.

N-95 and surgical masks should be reserved for health care workers. Commanders may authorize the optional wear of protective gloves in consultation with local medical professionals. Additionally, commanders who determine the purchase and issuance of cloth face coverings is necessary for mission requirements should consult with legal and comptroller about purchasing and issuing the coverings. Security checkpoints may require the lowering of masks to verify identification.

Local commanders can approve exceptions to this requirement, when implementation is not practical, and share information up the chain of command for situational awareness.

The use of a cloth face covering does not prevent the wearer from getting sick or eliminate the need to continue the primary mitigation efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19.

All personnel should continue to maintain six feet between themselves and others whenever possible. The cloth face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing. The cloth face covering is to help prevent those who are asymptomatic from transmitting, more than protecting oneself from potentially contracting the virus. Please, continue to check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for more information (<https://www.cdc.gov/>).

//Signed/BTK/5 April 20//  
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DCS, Manpower, Personnel, and Services