Institute Guidelines on Use of Face Coverings to Protect Others

When worn properly, face coverings can mitigate the transmission of disease by preventing the wearer from potentially spreading droplets with the virus to others when the wearer coughs, sneezes, or talks.

In accordance with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state and local orders, Caltech requires that all faculty, staff, students, and visitors wear a face covering that fully covers their nose and mouth when in all buildings and shared environments on campus. This includes, but is not limited to, while in administrative and research buildings, classrooms, offices, and parking structures; when using outdoor walkways and grounds; and in any other instances in which they may be in the company of others from outside their households. Individuals are not required to wear a face covering when alone in a room, cubicle, or vehicle, or when they are outdoors for dining, exercise, or other activities and are able to maintain a minimum of 6 feet (2 meters) of distance from all individuals who are not part of their household. For students living in-residence, members of Student Affairs-approved cohorts will be designated to be individuals of a single household.

Wearing a face covering supplements, but does not replace, physical-distancing requirements. All faculty, staff, students, and visitors should continue to maintain at least a 6-foot separation while on campus grounds.

Individuals are not required to wear a face covering if wearing one would adversely affect that individual's health for reasons that include, but are not limited to, the existence of a medical condition, such as difficulty breathing or an inability to place or remove the face covering without assistance. If wearing a face covering inhibits your health please contact the Disability and Leave Administration Unit. If wearing a face covering impedes your ability to complete a job or task, please contact your supervisor or advisor for evaluation of alternative solutions.

Caltech will be providing two (2) reusable cloth face coverings as an initial outfitting to each person working on the campus. Faculty, staff, students, and visitors are also encouraged to procure their own cloth face coverings to allow the use of specific shapes, fabrics, etc., and to maximize comfort.

Disposable single-use face coverings (face masks) will only be available to visitors or to individuals working on campus who forget to bring their face covering to work.

Proper procedures to put on the face covering:

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the face covering.
- Ensure the face covering fits snugly over the nose and under the chin.
- Tie straps behind the head and neck or loop around the ears.
- Throughout the process: Avoid touching the front of the face covering and your mouth, nose, or eyes.

To take off the face covering:

- Wash your hands before taking off the face covering.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing the face covering.
- When taking off the face covering, loop your finger into the strap and pull the strap away from the ear, or untie the straps.
- Wash hands immediately after removing.

Care, storage, and laundering:

- Keep face coverings stored in a paper bag or zip-lock bag when not in use.
- Cloth face coverings may not be used more than one day at a time and then must be laundered before the next work day, or an alternate cloth face covering must be used.
- Cloth face coverings should be properly laundered with regular clothing detergent before first use, and after each shift.

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• Cloth face coverings should be replaced immediately if soiled, damaged (e.g., ripped, punctured, etc.) or visibly contaminated.
• A disposable face coverings must not be used for more than one day and should be placed in the trash after a work shift or if it is soiled or damaged (e.g., stretched ear loops, torn or punctured material).

Disability and Reasonable Accommodation:
• As required by law, Caltech will make reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified individuals with known disabilities including students, faculty, postdoctoral scholars, staff, volunteers, interns, and job applicants to ensure equal employment opportunities and equal access to Caltech educational programs, services, activities, and facilities unless doing so would constitute an undue hardship or a fundamental alteration.
• Caltech does not have an obligation to provide an accommodation if the proposed accommodation poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
• Caltech will take each of these considerations in mind when determining whether an individual seeking a modification to the requirements set forth in this policy can be reasonably accommodated.
• For more information on seeking an accommodation, please review Caltech’s Disability and Reasonable Accommodation policy.

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