

## Institute Guidelines on Use of Face Coverings

When worn properly, face coverings mitigate the transmission of disease by preventing the wearer from spreading virus-carrying droplets when the wearer coughs, sneezes, or talks.

### Institute Requirements

In accordance with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local orders, Caltech requires that all individuals on Caltech's Pasadena campus, regardless of vaccination status, [properly wear a face](#) covering that fully covers their nose and mouth at all times when indoors, except when in a private office or other private setting. Face coverings with one-way valves may not be used as they are not effective for infection control; such coverings may allow the wearer's respiratory droplets to spread.

**This is an update (effective July 17, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.) of previous guidance that had relaxed the requirement for the use of face coverings indoors by fully vaccinated individuals. With the recent climb in infections, local public health officials have mandated that all Los Angeles County area businesses, including institutes of higher education, require the use of face coverings in indoor public settings where individuals from different households may be present. This update specifically applies to individuals accessing the Pasadena campus or other Caltech-managed facilities in the Los Angeles County area; employees, students, and visitors to off-site locations managed by Caltech should consult with the management at that location and expect to follow all local public health and government orders for that municipality.**

According to the county's updated health order, individuals may remove their face covering when they are alone in a private office or private setting, such as a personal residence (including a dormitory or apartment). Residents in congregate living and dormitory residences may go without their face covering as long as they are only in the company of other household members; household members are defined as the assigned roommates or suitemates for that shared living space only.

If wearing a face covering impedes your ability to complete a job or task, you should contact your supervisor or adviser for evaluation of alternative solutions.

As required by law, Caltech will make reasonable accommodations regarding face coverings for 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. 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.

### Selecting a Face Covering

There are many choices for face coverings. Current [CDC guidance recommends](#) that individuals do the following:

- Wear a covering with two or more layers of breathable, washable fabric
- Wear a covering that fits snugly against your face without gaps
- Reduce fogging when wearing glasses by finding a covering that fits closely over your nose and one that has a nose wire.

The CDC does not currently recommend the use of face shields and gaiters. Evaluation of these face coverings is on-going but their effectiveness is unknown at this time.

Caltech continues to monitor research (external and internal) on the effectiveness of different types of face coverings and will update the Institute's guidance to align with new information and recommendations as it is

**Caltech**  
available.

Additional guidance on the use of and care for your face covering is available in the [How to Wear and Care for Your Face Covering](#) document.