

WORKPLACE SAFETY GUIDELINES – COVID-19

Procedure Masks (Surgical Masks)

Updated April 12, 2021

Procedure masks (surgical masks) are mandatory when entering, circulating, and working in university buildings, including lobbies/reception areas, hallways, elevators, staircases, workshops/studios, and classrooms. This applies to all staff, faculty, students, visitors and contractors.



TYPES OF MASKS Updated

Different types of masks are being used in medical and non-medical settings to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Medical masks include N95 respirators and procedure masks (surgical masks), while non-medical masks include cloth face coverings. The table below illustrates the different types of masks and their uses.

Type of Mask	Properties	Uses	Acceptable in University indoor spaces?
Procedure mask (surgical mask) 	Typically a 3 layer laminate structure. Certified ASTM F2100 or equivalent. Ensures the protection of the worker and of those in their proximity against the projection of droplets.	CNESST mandates the use of procedure mask (surgical mask) at all times in the workplace. Mandatory when entering University buildings. See section <i>When to Wear a Mask on Campus</i>	<u>YES</u>
N95 respirator 	NIOSH certified filtering facepiece respirator with a filtration efficiency where at least 95% of particles are filtered Various types available, including with an exhalation valve.	For use in environments where exposure to aerosols is likely. Reserved for healthcare settings.	Without an exhalation valve – <u>YES</u> With an exhalation valve – <u>NO</u> Respirators with exhalation valves are not effective in preventing transmission of the virus.
Non-medical cloth mask (face covering) 	Varies in fabric type and number of layers.	For use by the general public in non-healthcare settings. Mandatory in indoor public spaces in Quebec.	<u>NO</u> – unless if being worn over a procedure mask. See <i>Double Masking</i> section below.
Air purifying respirators	NIOSH certified reusable respiratory protection.	Designed to protect the wearer from hazardous	<u>NO</u> – except if wearing one is necessary for the task being performed.

Type of Mask	Properties	Uses	Acceptable in University indoor spaces?
	<p>Can be full face or half face.</p> <p>Have removable filters or cartridges that are specific to the hazard.</p>	aerosols, vapours and dust.	Respirators with exhalation valves are not effective in preventing transmission of the virus.

WHEN TO WEAR A MASK ON CAMPUS Updated

Procedure masks (Surgical Masks) are to be worn at all times when indoors on campus. Masks may only be removed when working alone in a closed room (ex. a closed office) and the door is closed. They must be put on a mask as soon as another person enters the room. Instructors may remove their mask when teaching, as long as everyone else remains masked and at a 2 meter distance from each other.

Masks may also be removed at mealtimes. However, the mask should be removed only before starting the meal and put back on immediately afterwards. The physical distance of at least two meters must be respected at all times, including during meals and breaks.

In Shared Offices: masks are required when there is more than 1 person in an office and you must also maintain 2 metres of physical distance from each other. Given wearing a mask for extended periods of time can be uncomfortable and increases the likelihood of touching a contaminated mask, it is strongly recommended that you coordinate with office colleagues to limit time together in shared offices.

For those activities requiring employees to work less than 2 metres from each other or from students, without a physical barrier, a risk assessment must be carried out to ensure that the appropriate personal protective equipment is used. Contact EHS at extension 4877 or ehs@concordia.ca.

IMPORTANT: The mandatory procedure mask (surgical mask) required in indoor spaces on campus by the CNESST is IN ADDITION TO the other public safety directives, such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and maintaining 2 metres of physical distance from others. The government introduced this public safety measure in Universities to reduce the community transmission of the virus.

DOUBLE MASKING

The Center for Disease Control has recommended double masking as an effective means of limiting the spread of COVID-19. Although not required at Concordia, double masking will be accepted, as long as one of the masks is a procedure mask (surgical mask). The procedure mask (surgical mask) should be worn underneath the face covering to achieve a better fit.

TIPS FOR WEARING A PROCEDURE MASK (SURGICAL MASK)

- Wash your hands before and after putting on the mask.
- Ensure that the mask covers both the nose and mouth.
- Pinch the metal clip on the bridge of the nose to secure the mask in place.
- If you are double masking, wear the cloth mask over the procedure mask (surgical mask)



- Avoid touching your mask. If you do, wash your hands as soon as possible.
- Change your mask if it becomes moist, soiled or damaged.
- Replace your mask at least every four hours.
- Do not leave the mask hanging from your neck or ear.



HOW TO DISPOSE OF A PROCEDURE MASK (SURGICAL MASK) Updated

Disposable masks are not intended for reuse. They must be disposed of immediately following use. Use the elastic loops to remove your mask and avoid touching the front.

Collection bins have been placed at the entrances to all open buildings. Masks placed in these bins will be recycled. Unfortunately masks thrown away in regular garbage bins or office recycling bins will not be recycled.

WHEN SHOULD A PROCEDURE MASK (SURGICAL MASK) BE REPLACED?

Replace your mask whenever:

- It becomes moist or humid
- It gets dirty or soiled
- If it is damaged
- After 4 hours of wear

Questions? Contact us at ehs@concordia.ca or by phone at extension 4877.