34.99.99.C0.02  Use of Face Coverings to Reduce the Spread of Communicable Diseases

Approved: July 13, 2020
Next Scheduled Review: July 13 2025

Procedure Summary

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) is committed to protecting the health and safety of its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The use of face coverings (e.g., cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) is recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases (e.g., COVID-19, influenza). As such, TAMU-CC developed this procedure regarding the use of face coverings on campus that aligns with the guidance from the CDC, State of Texas, Texas A&M University System, Nueces County, and City of Corpus Christi. An official campus announcement will be sent when this procedure is in effect and the use of face coverings is required.

Procedure

1. General

   1.1. To prevent the spread of communicable diseases, the CDC recommends the use of face coverings (see below for a link to the CDC Recommendations for the Use of Cloth Face Coverings). When notified via an official campus announcement that this procedure is in effect, TAMU-CC students, faculty, staff, and visitors will comply with this recommendation from the CDC, as well as to any orders from the State of Texas, Texas A&M University System, Nueces County, or City of Corpus Christi.

   1.2. The primary purpose of using a face covering is to reduce the amount of virus spreading from the wearer into the environment and to others. The secondary purpose of using a face covering is to reduce the likelihood of the wearer contracting the virus from respiratory droplets containing the virus that are generated by others in the environment that may otherwise enter the wearer’s nose or mouth. The use of a face covering does not replace the continued need for adequate physical/social distancing, defined by the CDC as at least six (6) feet, but instead augments physical distancing and helps us further reduce the likelihood of virus transmission.
1.3. While the university may provide face coverings when available, employees and students are encouraged to have multiple additional face coverings to be able to begin each day with a clean face covering. All TAMU-CC students, faculty, staff, and visitors should follow the current *CDC Recommendations for the Use of Cloth Face Coverings* (see link below).

1.4. The guidelines in this procedure are based on the most recent available guidance from the CDC, State of Texas, Texas A&M University System, Nueces County, and City of Corpus Christi and are subject to change as new information becomes available.

2. Face Covering Use Requirements

2.1. When notified via an official campus announcement that this procedure is in effect, face coverings must be worn by all individuals (students, faculty, staff, and visitors) while on campus in the following areas:

(a) Indoor public areas except where otherwise marked, even if the individual is alone. This includes all non-private office or residential spaces (e.g., hallways, lobbies, restrooms, classrooms, teaching laboratories, research laboratories, conference rooms, break rooms, and other community areas).

(b) Outdoor spaces where adequate physical/social distancing (six (6) feet of physical space) is difficult to reliably maintain.

2.2. Face coverings are required for everyone in research laboratories.

2.2.1. Most face coverings do not provide respiratory protection and must not be substituted for proper respiratory protection that may be required as part of certain research duties. Respirators with exhalation valves do not impede the spread of communicable diseases unless they contain an internal filter.

2.2.2. An FDA-approved surgical mask or filtering facepiece respirator, as appropriate for the task, should be used for research situations involving heat and/or open flame.

3. Face Covering Usage and Care

TAMU-CC will follow the most current guidance from the CDC regarding the proper use and care of face coverings. Please refer to both the *CDC Recommendations for the Use of Cloth Face Coverings* (see link below) and the CDC website for the latest guidance.

4. Exceptions
4.1. Exceptions and/or waivers to the face covering use requirements listed in section 2 of this procedure for either areas or individuals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Requests may be made as outlined below.

4.1.1. Students requesting an exception to the face covering use requirements due to a disability or a documented medical condition should contact Disability Services.

4.1.2. Students requesting an exemption to the face covering use requirements due to a religious concern should contact Employee Development and Compliance Services (EDCS).

4.1.3. Faculty, staff, and visitors requesting exception to the face covering use requirements due to a disability or a documented medical condition shall follow the process outlined in university procedure 08.01.02.C0.01, Employee/Applicant Requests for Reasonable Accommodations Under the ADA.

4.1.4. Faculty, staff, and visitors requesting exception to the face covering use requirements due to a religious concern shall follow the process outlined in university procedure 08.01.01.C1.03, Employee Requests for Religious Accommodations.

4.1.5. Area exceptions must be submitted to the Environmental, Health & Safety office and contain the following information: the requested location, the reason that face coverings are not feasible, and the additional safety measures taken to further mitigate the risk of spreading communicable diseases in the absence of face coverings. Areas where an exception to the face covering use requirements has been granted will be clearly marked by Environmental, Health & Safety with signs indicating that an exception has been granted.

5. Disciplinary Action

All students, faculty, staff, and visitors are expected to fully comply with this procedure. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination and/or expulsion.

6. Additional information regarding the use of face coverings can be found in the TAMU-CC Use of Face Coverings to Reduce the Spread of Communicable Diseases Frequently Asked Questions (link in the Appendix section of this procedure).

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements
Appendix

TAMU-CC Return to the Workplace Plan
TAMU-CC Student Return to Campus Plan
TAMU-CC Use of Face Coverings to Reduce the Spread of Communicable Diseases FAQ

Contact Office

Contact for clarification and interpretation: Environmental, Health & Safety
(361) 825-5555