

Dear Colleagues,

This is the first day of the compulsory wearing of a mask or a face covering any time you leave your home. I remind everyone that you must use a mask or face covering for your commute to and from work, and while at work.

I understand that this can be challenging in different ways for different people. There were 403 new COVID-19 cases reported overnight and more people are in hospitals. It is therefore important that we all comply and do our part in helping to slow the spread of the virus.

We have an obligation to keep ourselves and others safe. Individually, it is important we continue to practise good hand hygiene, maintain physical distancing and understand the risks and symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, stay home and seek medical advice.

Metro expects our people to abide by the direction of the State Government in regards to the compulsory wearing of a mask or face covering.

We've received a range of queries from our people seeking further information about mask wearing while at work. We are working as quickly as possible but information continues to evolve in this rapidly changing situation. You may find the attached updated frequently asked questions useful. We've highlighted in yellow the recently added information. I encourage you to read it. The added information covers:

- Permitted exemptions to wearing a mask – there are only limited legal exemptions mainly for individuals with medical conditions or when wearing a mask poses a health and safety risk relating to your work. Other reasons include work that requires clear enunciation such as broadcasting, or consuming food, drink and medication.
- Travelling in Metro vehicles – a mask is required for the entire duration of your journey even when you are travelling alone as vehicles are a shared asset.
- Employees working at a signal box must also wear a mask at all times.
- The wearing of masks by Drivers – masks must be worn when outside the cab. Inside the cab, where it can be a source of distraction, Drivers can choose whether to wear a mask when driving. If there is a second person in the cab, that person must wear a mask at all times so the Driver can choose whether to wear a mask or not.
- Employees at corporate offices like 700 and 595 Collins Street are required to wear a mask at all times even when alone. Our Chief Medical Officer has clarified that an enclosed office is not a station or an open plan office. An enclosed office is a single room with a single door in and out with only one person using it and not shared.
- Employees at Stations must wear a mask at all times even when alone or are the only person working at a Station.
- If you have a beard, make sure the mask covers your nose and mouth, and is fitted as tightly as you can tolerate to your face.
- If you are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons, you need to speak to your leader. You will need to provide evidence from a medical practitioner to support this.

Further DHHS guidance on [masks](#) can be found here.

If you have further questions or concerns, please talk to your leader.

Stay safe.

Regards  
Jodie

**Jodie Talone**  
**Acting Executive Director Zero Harm**



## Frequently Asked Questions: Mandatory masks

Click on a question below to be automatically directed to the relevant answer

Questions highlighted in yellow were most recently added to this list.

Are there any permitted exemptions to wearing a mask?	2
I travel in <b>Metro</b> vehicles alone and with colleagues – do we have to wear a mask inside?	2
I work at a signal box – do I need to wear a mask?	2
I'm a Driver – do I need to wear a mask in the cab while driving?	2
I work at a corporate office – do I need to wear a mask even when alone?	2
I work at a Station - Do I need to wear a mask even when alone?	3
What should I do if I have a beard?	3
What if I'm unable to wear a mask for medical reasons?	3
Do I have to wear a mask at work?	3
I undertake work that involves Safety Critical Communications, do I need to wear a face mask?	3
Can I take my face covering off during pre-starts to ensure everyone can hear me?	3
I need to blow a whistle whilst working on track. Do I need to wear a mask?	4
What if I need to exert a lot of energy and need to be able to breathe freely?	4
What is the requirement for medical certificates in relation to COVID-19?	4
Where do I get a mask from?	4
What should I do if I wear glasses that fog up while I am wearing a mask?	4
What if I'm unable to wear a mask because it's unsafe with the work I do?	5
When should I replace my mask?	5
Do I still need to social distance when wearing a mask?	5
What happens if I don't wear a mask?	5
Are the cloth masks okay to use as they are not three layers?	6
Can I use one of the P2 or N95 masks like we used with the bushfires?	6
Will I be given enough masks to cover my shift?	6
Does Metro have enough masks for everyone?	6
Are Metro employees expected to enforce passengers to wear masks?	6
What if passengers ask me to take action against a non-mask wearing passenger?	6
Should we be providing masks to passengers?	6



## Are there any permitted exemptions to wearing a mask?

There are a limited number of legal exemptions to wearing a mask:

- Individuals with medical conditions affected by mask wearing can be exempt from wearing a mask or face covering. For example, problems with breathing, serious skin conditions or a disability or mental health condition.
- Where wearing a mask would pose a health and safety risk to someone relating to their work.
- People performing work that require clear enunciation or visibility of their mouth are exempt from wearing a mask while conducting this work. Examples include live broadcasting, or consuming food, drink or medication.

Everyone must carry a mask or face covering with them when leaving the home for one of the four reasons, even if it is not worn while conducting a specific exempt activity.

## I travel in **Metro** vehicles alone and with colleagues – do we have to wear a mask inside?

Yes, you will be required to wear a mask when travelling in **Metro** vehicles for the entire duration of your journey to keep you and your colleagues safe. This includes when travelling alone in a **Metro** vehicle.

## I work at a signal box – do I need to wear a mask?

Yes, employees will be required to wear a mask at all times when working in all Metro workplaces to keep themselves and their colleagues safe.

## I'm a Driver – do I need to wear a mask in the cab while driving?

Outside of the cab, Drivers must wear a mask including travelling to and from work, in depots, in sidings and on platforms.

Inside the Driving cab, masks may be a source of distraction when driving so Drivers can choose whether to wear a mask whilst driving.

When there is a second person in the cab, that person must wear a mask (this allows Drivers to choose whether to wear a mask whilst driving).

## I work at a corporate office – do I need to wear a mask even when alone?

Yes, employees will be required to wear a mask at all times when working in all Metro workplaces to keep themselves and their colleagues safe. Our Chief Medical Officer has clarified that an enclosed office is not a Station or an open plan office. An enclosed office is a single room with a single door in and out with only one person using it and not shared.

The wearing of masks has been mandated by the Victorian Government and a failure to comply is breaking the law.



## I work at a Station - Do I need to wear a mask even when alone?

Yes, employees will be required to wear a mask at all times when working in all Metro workplaces to keep themselves, their colleagues safe and the community safe. This includes when you are alone or the only person working at a Station.

Our Chief Medical Officer has clarified that an enclosed office is not a Station or an open plan office. An enclosed office is a single room with a single door in and out with only one person using it and not shared.

## What should I do if I have a beard?

If you have a beard, ensure the mask covers your nose and mouth, and is fitted as tightly as you can tolerate to your face. The most important thing about wearing a mask is to cover your nose and mouth. Masks and face coverings offer a protection barrier but do not provide air tight protection. They help prevent transmission to others in the community and provide some protection against airborne droplets.

## What if I'm unable to wear a mask for medical reasons?

If you are unable to wear a mask due to medical reasons please speak with your leader. You will need evidence from a medical practitioner to support this and it is likely Police will also request to see a copy of this.

## Do I have to wear a mask at work?

From 11.59pm on Wednesday 22 July, people living in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire aged 12 years and over will be required to wear a face covering when leaving home for one of the four permitted reasons. The fine for not wearing a face covering is \$200.

For Metro, this means that all Metro employees must wear a mask while working, including corporate offices and depots, unless there are specific reasons that makes this not practical or unsafe.

Employees will be required to wear a mask at all times when working in all Metro workplaces, including corporate offices.

## I undertake work that involves Safety Critical Communications, do I need to wear a face mask?

We must always ensure we apply good safety critical communications (SCC) protocols. At any time, if the exchanging of information is unclear or you believe you may have misheard or misunderstood, you must ask and repeat back what you have heard. Apply the ABCs (accurate, clear, brief) to deliver the message, repeat back and confirm. This should not be inhibited by the wearing of a face mask.

## Can I take my face covering off during pre-starts to ensure everyone can hear me?

You can only remove your face covering if you are communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication. For all other occasions you must wear a face covering and maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres.



I need to blow a whistle to warn personnel of trains approaching whilst working on track. Do I need to wear a mask?

You need to wear a mask at all times where it is practicable to do so. It would be seen as reasonable for a person to pull down their mask to blow the whistle, and continue to remain covered during other times.

What if I need to exert a lot of energy to perform manual handling duties and need to be able to breathe freely?

If you are concerned that wearing a face covering will create a safety risk, it is important that you discuss the situation with your manager prior to removing the mask and conducting the work.

What is the requirement for medical certificates in relation to COVID-19?

Medical certificate requirements have not changed. Statutory declarations will be accepted in place of medical certificates, with the exception of confirmed cases of the infectious disease associated with the epidemic or pandemic, where Metro requires a medical certificate.

Where do I get a mask from?

We have masks available at Metro workplaces.

Passenger Delivery colleagues: Speak to your leader and they will provide you with access to masks.

**Employees based at 595 Collins Street:** Single use masks are available, please talk to your manager. There is usually someone at 595 Collins Street to assist with distribution.

**Employees based at 700 Collins Street:** there is usually no one at 700 Collins Street to manage mask distribution. You will have to make sure you have your own masks when you come into the office on an ad hoc basis. Always have some spares in case you are using a single-use mask and need to change it.

If you are based at a corporate office such as 700 Collins Street or 595 Collins Street and your role cannot be worked from home, you will be required to wear a mask at all times while working in the workplace and Metro will provide you with masks. Please speak to your manager if this applies to you.

What should I do if I wear glasses that fog up while I am wearing a mask?

Make sure the face covering is fitted and pinched on your nose if possible. Put your glasses on after the face covering.

Twisting the side elastics before placing over your ears will create a tighter seal at the bridge of the nose and an opening on the sides of the mask (see next page):



Wash your glasses with detergent and water to create a film to prevent fogging. Use an anti-fogging spray.

If fogging continues, please inform your manager

### What if I'm unable to wear a mask because it's unsafe with the work I do?

If you are unable to wear a mask due to it being unsafe for the type of work you do, please speak with your leader. Metro is working quickly to identify these tasks and appropriate responses.

### When should I replace my mask?

Metro follows the guidelines of DHHS and you can get more information on this [here](#).

Based on the advice of our Chief Medical Officer, it is recommended that if you are wearing a single-use face mask, you should replace it when it becomes wet or half way through your shift (on your break).

Employees will be required to wear a mask at all times when working in all Metro workplaces. This means you must wear a mask for the entire duration of your shift.

Further information on how to put on and take off your mask, and how to care for a cloth mask is available. Please speak with your leader if you are not able to locate this information.

### Do I still need to social distance when wearing a mask?

Masks do not replace social distancing. You should continue to socially distance where you can and practice good hand hygiene, even if you are wearing a mask.

### What happens if I don't wear a mask?

Metro expects all of its employees to abide by State Government mandate in regards to wearing of masks. Metro employees who do not wear a mask, without an agreed reason, may be stood down pending an investigation and may result in disciplinary action.

To be clear, the wearing of masks has been mandated by the Victorian Government and a failure to comply is breaking the law.





### Are the cloth masks okay to use as they are not three layers?

Metro has followed the advice of the Chief Medical Officer regarding cloth masks, who has advised the cloth masks provided by Metro are appropriate for COVID-19. If you prefer, single use surgical masks are available, or you can wear your own mask as long as it is plain, has no slogans or wording, and no inappropriate designs.

### Can I use one of the P2 or N95 masks like we used with the bushfires?

It is not recommended that you use P2 and N95 masks with COVID-19. It is recommended that you use single use surgical masks or cloth masks that Metro are providing. If you choose to bring your own cloth mask(s) that is permitted, as long as it is plain, has no slogans or wording and no inappropriate designs.

### Will I be given enough masks to cover my shift?

Some people in Passenger Delivery will already have been provided with their cloth masks, for others these will be provided in the coming days. There are single use surgical masks also available for our frontline employees who need them.

You are welcome to wear your own mask as long as it is plain, has no slogans or wording, and no inappropriate designs. You will be asked to remove any inappropriate masks and a single use surgical mask will be made available for you.

### Does Metro have enough masks for everyone?

Metro has a stock of appropriate masks available for our employees, both surgical and cloth, with a further supply to replenish and more on order. Passenger facing roles were prioritised in the distribution of cloth masks. Speak to your leader to understand how you access masks in your workplace. Those Metro employees who can work from home, should continue to work from home.

### Are Metro employees expected to enforce passengers to wear masks?

The only people with authority to enforce mask wearing are the Police and Protective Service Officers. It is not our role to enforce social distancing, nor the wearing of masks, on our network. Please do not put yourself in a potential conflict situation.

### What if passengers ask me to take action against a non-mask wearing passenger?

Refer them on to the closest Police or Protective Service Officers, explaining politely that you are not authorised to enforce mask wearing. It is not our role to enforce social distancing, nor the wearing of masks, on our network. Always prioritise your safety and follow your training when dealing with passengers.

### Should we be providing masks to passengers?

No. It is not our role to provide masks to our passengers and our stock allocation are factored around employee numbers only. Passengers are required to provide their own face coverings, and have a personal obligation to be wearing them from leaving their place of residence.