



## Frequently Asked Questions: Mandatory masks

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## Are there any permitted exemptions to wearing a face covering?

There are a limited number of legal exemptions to wearing a face covering:

- 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 or face covering 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 or face covering 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. The four reasons are: to shop for food or other essentials, attend work or education (if you can't do this from home), exercise, or for medical care or compassionate needs.

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

Employees are required to wear a face-covering when driving a Metro vehicle, including when they are driving alone.

This is unless there are specific reasons that make this impractical or unsafe. The employee should speak to their leader in the first instance. These reasons must be supported by a risk assessment. The leader should undertake a risk assessment and if required, contact their local safety representative to assist.

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

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 face covering 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 face covering 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 face coverings 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 face covering even when alone?

Yes, employees will be required to wear a face covering at all times when working in all Metro workplaces to keep themselves, their colleagues 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 your face covering covers your nose and mouth, and is fitted as tightly as you can tolerate to your face. The most important thing about wearing a face covering is to cover your nose and mouth. 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 or other face covering for medical reasons?

If you are unable to wear a face covering due to medical reasons, please speak with your leader.

Updated advice from Metro's Chief Medical Officer is that, where employees have a medical reason as to why they cannot wear a face covering, the employee must provide a medical certificate from their treating Specialist. A medical certificate from a GP is no longer acceptable. Where an employee has previously provided a related medical certificate, including from a GP – and where the certificate was accepted by Metro – no further certificate will be required.

## Do I have to wear a face covering at work?

All Victorians are 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 face covering 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 face covering 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 covering?

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 covering.

## 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. For those Infrastructure employees that are required to use a whistle as part of their role, there are now air horns available that can be safely used whilst continuing to wear a face covering. If you require an air horn they are available from the Infrastructure Safety Office at E Gate.

## 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.

## 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 face covering?

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 if a face mask 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 example below):



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 face covering because it's unsafe with the work I do?

If you are unable to wear a face covering 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 face covering at all times when working in all Metro workplaces. This means you must wear a face covering 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 face covering?

Face coverings 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 face covering.



## What happens if I don't wear a face covering?

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

To be clear, the wearing of face coverings 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 or face covering 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 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 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 face coverings?

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



### What if passengers ask me to take action against a passenger who is not wearing a face covering?

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

### Should we be providing face coverings to passengers?

No. It is not our role to provide face coverings 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 when leaving their place of residence.