



## Frequently Asked Questions: Mandatory masks

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### 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 fitted face mask when leaving. The fine for not wearing a mask is \$200.

For Metro this means that all Metro employees must wear a face mask while working, unless there are specific reasons that makes this impractical or unsafe. These reasons must be supported by a risk assessment. Team leaders should undertake any required risk assessments, and can contact their local safety representative to assist.

### My office is usually at a corporate office like 700 Collins Street or 595 Collins Street and I now work from home. Sometimes I come into the office. Do I need to wear a mask in the office?

Yes, you will be required to wear a face mask at all times when working in all Metro workplaces, including corporate offices. All Metro employees who are able to work from home should continue to work from home.

### I'm located at 595 Collins Street, does Metro give me the masks for the days I come into the office on an ad hoc basis?

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

### I'm located at 700 Collins Street, does Metro give me the masks for the days I come into the office on an ad hoc basis?

No, there is usually no one at 700 Collins Street to manage mask distribution. You will have to make sure you have your own face mask 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.

### I work at 700 Collins Street or 525 Collins Street and my role cannot be worked from home. I have been going full time into the office. Do I need to wear a mask in the office?

Yes, you will be required to wear a face mask at all times when working in all Metro workplaces, including corporate offices. Please talk to your leader about the process for you to access a face mask.

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

Face 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 face mask.



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

There are a limited number of legal exemptions to wearing a face 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 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 with them when leaving the home, even if it is not worn while conducting a specific exempt activity.

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

Employees are required to wear a fitted face mask 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 mask?

Yes, employees will be required to wear a fitted face 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 mask in the cab while driving?

Outside of the cab, Drivers must wear a fitted face 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 Station - Do I need to wear a face mask even when alone?

Yes, employees will be required to wear a fitted face mask 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 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 face mask is to cover your nose and mouth. Face masks 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 have a medical condition you will be required to provide a medical exemption from a Specialist, explaining the reasons for the exemption from wearing a face mask. If you are unable to see a Specialist and your mask exemption is from a GP, this will require validation by our Chief Medical Officer (CMO). You should provide a copy of the GP medical exemption to your leader. The medicals team will coordinate the validation with the CMO and revert back to your leader with an outcome.

While this process is ongoing you will be required to wear a fitted face mask while working. If you are unable or unwilling to do so you will be required to go home.

It is advisable that proof of the exemption is carried with you at all times.

Exemptions that have already been granted will be honoured without further medical proof required. If you were issued an exemption from a GP prior to July 30 will not be required to obtain further proof from a Specialist, as the GP exemption will be honoured. If you do not have the correct medical exemption and cannot wear a face mask you are not safe in the working environment and you may be sent home.

### Why are we not providing the option to wear a fitted snood, buff or gaiter when the DHHS website says that is allowed?

Metro's position on the wearing of fitted snoods, buffs and gaiters does not contradict the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) advice. We have followed the advice of DHHS since the beginning of the pandemic and will continue to do so.

The advice states that masks are recommended and that fitted snoods, buffs and gaiters are allowed. A mask offers a greater level of protection than a snood, buff or gaiter, therefore we are holding ourselves to this higher standard and expect all Metro employees to wear a fitted mask unless they hold a valid medical exemption. Please speak to your leader if you have further questions about the medical exemption process.

### 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 mask off during pre-starts to ensure everyone can hear me?

You can only remove your face mask 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 mask 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 mask. 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 mask 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 of 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 mask because it's unsafe with the work I do?

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

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

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

To be clear, the wearing of face 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.

### 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. Fitted face masks are the only recommended face covering by the DHHS, and our Chief Medical Officer, therefore all Metro employees are required to wear a fitted face mask, unless they hold an exemption.

### 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 fitted face 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 masks?

The only people with authority to enforce the wearing of face masks are the Police and Protective Service Officers. It is not our role to enforce social distancing, nor the wearing of face masks, 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 mask?

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



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

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