



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
*PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600*

April 27, 2020

ALTSA: AFH #2020-018  
ALTSA: ALF #2020-021  
ALTSA: CCRSS #2020-015  
ALTSA: ESF #2020-015  
ALTSA: NH #2020-025  
**CLOTH FACE COVERING DISTRIBUTION**

Dear Providers and Administrators:

The Department of Social and Health Services will be sending a one-time shipment of cloth, reusable face coverings for staff and residents/clients in long term care facilities and agencies where there is no incidence of suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Cloth face coverings will not be distributed to facilities or agencies with suspected or positive COVID-19 cases in staff or residents/clients.

In non-COVID facilities and agencies, each of your staff, residents and clients should be offered at least one cloth face covering.

Please review and follow the Department of Health [guidance](#) on cloth face coverings for appropriate use and care.

The Washington State DOH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now recommend that people wear face coverings when they are in a public settings where they cannot maintain six feet of distance from others. This might include trips to a store, pharmacy, health clinic or similar places.

A cloth face covering is not a substitute for existing guidance to maintain six feet of physical distance and performing frequent hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer. ***Wearing a cloth face covering will not prevent the spread of COVID-19 without these other protective measures. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn when working with someone who is suspected or confirmed COVID-19.***

Additionally here is the advice from the Centers for Disease Control for use of cloth face coverings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

There is limited evidence to suggest the use of cloth face coverings helps reduce disease transmission. However they can reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs or sneezes, including someone who has COVID-19 but feels well.

Cloth face coverings should be washed frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily. Masks should be washed with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.

Discard face coverings that:

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- No longer cover the nose and mouth
- Have stretched out or have damaged ties or straps
- Cannot stay on your face
- Have holes or tears in the fabric

Again, these cloth face coverings must **NOT** be used when providing care to residents/clients who have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. People suspected of COVID-19 may have the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Changes in sense of taste or smell
- Diarrhea

If caring for residents or clients with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 obtain appropriate PPE from your usual source or, follow [the current process for ordering PPE](#).

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTION FROM YOUR FACILITY OR AGENCY ADMINISTRATION REGARDING THE APPROPRIATE USE OF PPE AS WELL AS THE APPROPRIATE USE OF CLOTH FACE COVERINGS.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety.

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director  
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"