



24 AUGUST 2020
MASKING POLICY FOR FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC
NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER, PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA

Background

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19, SARS-COV2) has reached pandemic levels and the state of Virginia continues to see widespread community transmission. Released on April 5, 2020, a Secretary of Defense (SecDef) memo and NAVADMIN 100/20 required, effective immediately, all individuals on DoD property, installations, and facilities to wear cloth face coverings when they cannot maintain six feet of social distance in public areas or work centers.

Policy

Effective April 16, 2020, all staff members were required to wear a mask when in public spaces on the hospital compound. Staff not involved in direct patient care should wear a cloth mask in accordance with the SecDef memo. Staff members who have duties that bring them within 6 feet of any patient, regardless of clinical scenario, should wear a procedural (medical grade) mask. Staff members should wear the procedural mask for the entire time they are in their clinical spaces (due to limited supplies, staff members are advised to make every effort to extend the use of masks to one mask per staff member per shift, as noted in the masking policy dated 1 April 2020). Masks should be replaced if they become wet or soiled, and hand hygiene should be performed before donning and after doffing the face mask. Departmental leadership will maintain oversight of local personal protective equipment (PPE) supply.

Staff members should continue to follow command guidance on increasing their protective posture as indicated by the clinical scenario (e.g. wearing an N95 mask during aerosol generating procedures). Additionally, staff should be mindful of and comply with CDC guidance on the proper wear and use of masks. All face masks should cover the face from the bridge of the nose to chin. Cloth face masks should have at least 2 layers of cloth and fit snugly.

Effective August 1, 2020, Active Duty members in uniform or scrubs may wear masks made of plain, neutral colors only: specifically, black, brown, tan, white, grey, green, or blue. Lettering/wording, logos, symbols, prints or patterns are not authorized. Camouflage patterns that match the uniform camouflage pattern are allowed. Fastening devices must be neutral in color and made of elastic, cord, string, or loops, and must tie behind the ears or the back of the head.

Effective August 24, 2020, visitors, patients, or staff who come to the facility unmasked will not be permitted to enter the facility. If staff present unmasked, they will be sent to their car, or home as required, to retrieve a mask. If visitors and patients present unmasked, they will be offered a mask; if they are unable to wear a mask, they will be offered a face shield. If they refuse both, they will not be permitted to enter without written documentation from a health care provider waiving the use of a mask and/or face shield. If a patient is in duress or presenting with an emergency condition, they will be directed to the Emergency Room. In that scenario, the above masking requirement will not apply.

This NMCP policy will remain in effect until modified, retracted or superseded by an updated policy. It will be documented, implemented, maintained and communicated to all persons working for, or on behalf of, NMCP.

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Commanding Officer