



TOOLBOX TALK



CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

USING THIS TOOLBOX TALK:

This toolbox talk gives a summary of basic safety procedures and safeguards to protect employees from COVID-19. **A site-specific COVID-19 Officer (who may also be the Health and Safety Officer) should be designated for every site to assist with these measures.**

Please note: This document is not intended to replace any formalized procedures currently in place at the worksite.

To limit the spread of COVID-19, do not pass this pamphlet around for workers to sign as you do with other LHSFNA toolbox talks.

Contact the LHSFNA's Occupational Safety and Health Division at 202-628-5465 to ask questions, provide feedback or for further assistance. Additional Fund toolbox

talks can be ordered at www.lhsfna.org or by calling the number above.

BACKGROUND:

Cloth face coverings are one of the three main ways – along with social/physical distancing and good hand hygiene – to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) on construction worksites. Both OSHA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Wearing facial coverings is a best practice and an example of “source control.” OSHA guidance reports that cloth face coverings protect other workers from being exposed to the virus. The CDC reports that using a cloth face covering can slow the spread of the virus by stopping people who are asymptomatic (infected, but don't know they have the virus) from spreading the virus to others.

While face coverings provide varying levels of protection depending on several factors, the bottom line is that any face covering that covers the nose and mouth will be of benefit. When everyone wears a face covering and is practicing physical distancing on the worksite, the risk of spreading coronavirus is significantly reduced. When we combine that with general awareness of spacing between co-workers and frequent handwashing, we can create a safer worksite.

FAST FACT

Facial coverings or masks are effective for COVID-19, but they do not protect you from other hazards on the jobsite.

HOW DO CLOTH FACE COVERINGS WORK?

Respiratory droplets can land in the mouth or nose and can be inhaled into the lungs. Cloth face coverings act as a simple barrier or “source control” to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings work best when donned and doffed correctly. Always practice the three Ws to help stop COVID-19: **Wear** a face covering, **Wash** your hands and **Watch** your distance.

HOW DO CLOTH FACE COVERINGS DIFFER FROM OTHER TYPES OF MASKS?

Cloth face masks do not provide respiratory protection from chemicals, dusts, gases or oxygen-deficient atmospheres. They are not recognized as personal protective equipment (PPE) nor are they as protective for the wearer as N95s or other half-face or full-face respirators. N95s and other respirators are recognized as PPE.

If harmful gases or dusts are present, such as silica dust, an N95 respirator may be required instead of a face covering. A cloth face covering cannot be used as a substitute.

HOW SHOULD I DON, DOFF AND CARE FOR CLOTH FACE COVERINGS?

When wearing a mask or face covering of any kind, avoid touching the mask or covering. Only touch your face with clean or freshly washed hands. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately in the following situations:

- ▶ Before putting on the face covering
- ▶ After touching or adjusting the face covering
- ▶ After removing the face covering

Face coverings are more effective when they achieve a snug fit around the nose and mouth.

Do not share! You should be the only one handling or cleaning your face covering. Care depends on the type of material used. Cloth face masks should be washed regularly using water and mild detergent, dried completely and stored in a container or bag.

When removing a face covering, first untie the string behind your head or stretch the ear loops. Only handle the face covering by the ear loops or strings and refrain from touching the front of the mask. Next, fold the outside corners together. Keep the covering in a bag when not in use and place the covering in the washing machine when soiled.

FAST FACT

Cloth masks should:

- ▶ Completely cover, and be worn over, the mouth and nose
- ▶ Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- ▶ Be secured with ties or ear loops
- ▶ Include multiple layers of fabric
- ▶ Allow for unrestricted breathing
- ▶ Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change of shape
- ▶ Be tied or otherwise secured to prevent slipping



DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS

1. Can you wear a face covering only over your mouth?
2. How do you correctly remove a face covering?
3. Can you use cloth masks for protection during other tasks, such as cutting block?

TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Cloth face coverings are simple barriers that protect people from airborne respiratory droplets caused by coughing, sneezing, talking and raising their voice. This is referred to as source control.
- ▶ Cloth face masks do not provide respiratory protection from chemicals, dusts, gases or oxygen-deficient atmospheres. They are not recognized as PPE nor are they as protective as N95s or other half-face or full-face respirators. N95s and other respirators are recognized as PPE.

Date: _____

Instructor: _____

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