

Order Requiring Face Coverings in Public when Social Distancing is Not Possible and Q&A

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On May 1, Governor Charlie Baker issued an order effective May 6 requiring face masks or cloth face coverings in public places where social distancing is not possible. The order applies to both indoor and outdoor spaces.

For a copy of the governor's order click [here](#).

For a copy of May 1 Department of Public Health guidance on wearing a facemask in public click [here](#).

For general information about face masks (multiple languages), including making your own click [here](#)

For information regarding commuting on public transit [click here](#)* Effective May 6, all riders and employees are required to wear a face covering while riding the MBTA.

Part I – General Questions

Who does this order cover?

The order requires everyone to wear a facemask when they are in public and cannot be at least six feet away from others.

The order applies to all workers and customers of business and other organizations open to the public that are permitted to operate as essential businesses.

Additionally, all persons are required to wear masks when inside grocery stores, pharmacies or other retail stores, or in taxis, ride sharing or public transportation.

Is anyone exempt from the order?

Children under 2 and anyone who has a medical condition that would prevent him or her from wearing a face covering is exempt.

What type of coverings are acceptable?

Face coverings should not be medical masks. You may use a T-shirt or bandana as a facemask. Medical-grade masks should be reserved for health-care and first responders.

When does this requirement begin and end?

The order took effect May 6 and will remain in effect until rescinded or until the emergency is terminated, whichever happens first.

What is the fine if you don't wear a face covering?

People who do not wear a face covering may face a fine of up to \$300. Enforcement is expected to be handled by local officials.

Does covering my face mean I can get within six feet of people?

No, the guidance specifically states that the use of a mask does not replace social distancing measures.

Part II – Questions from AIM Hotline Specific to Employers

May I force my employees to wear facemasks?

In most cases the answer is yes as long as there is a demonstrated business reason for it.

What if the employee refuses to wear masks?

If the reason is related to a disability the company should figure out what if any reasonable accommodation can be made. Examples of disability might include asthma or other respiratory conditions

Who has to pay for the masks?

The employer must pay for masks if the company is requiring it.

Who can I call at AIM for more information?

AIM members may contact Robert Rio, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs at 617-262-1180 or rrio@aimnet.org or call the Employer Hotline at 617-262-1180. To learn more about AIM contact membership@aimnet.org or www.aimnet.org