

Hi to all,

The Governor has [announced](#) a safe, gradual plan to restart Maine's economy.

Part of this [plan](#) is a specific "requirement to wear cloth face coverings in public settings where physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain". Here is [Executive Order #49](#) and today's [press release](#).

This guidance is meant to add a layer of protection from infection as we open more businesses. If it is hard to ensure consistent physical distancing, then the cloth face covering is required.

As Governor Mills states, "By wearing a cloth face covering, you are taking an important step in protecting others, and when others wear them, they are taking an important step in protecting you".

What does this mean for state work spaces?

The Order includes: "Employers in settings that are not typically accessible to the public may determine the persons who should wear a cloth face covering at their workplace and shall permit any employee who wants to wear a covering to do so."

As previously noted, most of our state workforce is working or dispatching remotely. And most of our office space is no longer accessible to the public. With a few exceptions due to the nature of your work (for example, hospitals, postal workers, correctional facilities), all State of Maine worksites should have effectively implemented social distancing measures and State employees and visitors should be adhering to those measures in and out of the workplace. For now, wearing a cloth face covering in an environment where employees and visitors are appropriately adhering to these guidelines is not mandatory. However, you are welcome to wear one if it makes you feel more comfortable to do so.

We are sending this to All State Employees, but the reality is that this is not going to be "one size fits all" guidance. When the time comes to transition employees back from remote dispatching or working, and as we re-open our locations to the public, it is likely that more consistent use of cloth face coverings in our work spaces will be required in some form.

Based on the Governor's plan, the transitioning of workers and reopening our facilities will not begin until at least June. And even then, it will be gradual. We have convened a Transition Committee to consider the various adjustments, including cloth face covering use, that may be required in our work spaces as a result of this pandemic. We will provide more information on the work of this Committee as it is developed.

The US CDC makes it clear that maintaining 6-foot physical distancing and cleaning your hands remain critical to managing the spread of the virus. The US CDC [advises](#) that wearing a cloth

face covering is not a substitute for this and other CDC hygiene guidance, which includes staying home when you are sick.

Disposable face coverings are available now. Cloth face coverings have been ordered through our Maine partner, [American Roots](#), and will be arriving and distributed soon. A first order may be received as early as next week, but bulk delivery of 4,000 per week will begin May 14. Also, the video in this [link](#) shows you how to make your own cloth face covering. And, the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership has [compiled a list of Maine companies producing face coverings](#), which the Administration is sharing with Maine people as a resource. Attached and here are the [other emails](#) we've sent relating to cloth face coverings.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your [Human Resources professionals](#).

Take care, Kirsten

*Kirsten LC Figueroa*

Commissioner

Department of Administrative and Financial Services