

When to wear a face covering

There are some places where you must wear a face covering by law, unless you are exempt or have a reasonable excuse.

In England you must wear a face covering in the following indoor settings (examples are given in brackets):

- public transport (aeroplanes, trains, trams and buses)
- taxis and private hire vehicles
- transport hubs (airports, rail and tram stations and terminals, maritime ports and terminals, bus and coach stations and terminals)
- shops and supermarkets (places which offer goods or services for retail sale or hire)
- shopping centres (malls and indoor markets)
- auction houses
- premises providing hospitality (bars, pubs, restaurants, cafes), except when seated at a table to eat or drink (see exemptions)
- post offices, banks, building societies, high-street solicitors and accountants, credit unions, short-term loan providers, savings clubs and money service businesses
- estate and lettings agents
- theatres
- premises providing personal care and beauty treatments (hair salons, barbers, nail salons, massage centres, tattoo and piercing parlours)
- premises providing veterinary services
- visitor attractions and entertainment venues (museums, galleries, cinemas, theatres, concert halls, cultural and heritage sites, aquariums, indoor zoos and visitor farms, bingo halls, amusement arcades, adventure activity centres, indoor sports stadiums, funfairs, theme parks, casinos, skating rinks, bowling alleys, indoor play areas including soft-play areas)
- libraries and public reading rooms
- places of worship
- funeral service providers (funeral homes, crematoria and burial ground chapels)

- community centres, youth centres and social clubs
- exhibition halls and conference centres
- public areas in hotels and hostels
- storage and distribution facilities

You are expected to wear a face covering before entering any of these settings and must keep it on until you leave unless there is a reasonable excuse for removing it.

You should also wear a face covering in indoor places not listed here where social distancing may be difficult and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

Face coverings are needed in NHS settings, including hospitals and primary or community care settings, such as GP surgeries. They are also advised to be worn in care homes.

When you do not need to wear a face covering

In settings where face coverings are required in England there are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering.

Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances. Some people are less able to wear face coverings, and the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- children under the age of 11 (Public Health England does not recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate

- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others – including if it would negatively impact on your ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity
- police officers and other emergency workers, given that this may interfere with their ability to serve the public
- There are also scenarios when you are permitted to remove a face covering:
 - if asked to do so in a bank, building society, or post office for identification
 - if asked to do so by shop staff or relevant employees for identification, for assessing health recommendations (for example by a pharmacist) or for age identification purposes, including when buying age restricted products such as alcohol
 - if required in order to receive treatment or services, for example when getting a facial
 - in order to take medication
 - if you are delivering a sermon or prayer in a place of worship
 - if you are the persons getting married in a relevant place
 - if you are aged 11 to 18 attending a faith school and having lessons in a place of worship as part of your core curriculum
 - if you are undertaking exercise or an activity and it would negatively impact your ability to do so
 - if you are an elite sports person, professional dancer or referee acting in the course of your employment
 - when seated to eat or drink in a hospitality premise such as a pub, bar, restaurant or cafe. You must put a face covering back on once you finish eating or drinking
 - The government's guidance for keeping workers and customers safe during COVID-19 in restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services clearly advises that designated indoor seating areas for customers to eat or drink should at this time only be open for table service, where possible, alongside additional infection control measures.

Staff in indoor settings

Face coverings must be worn by retail, leisure and hospitality staff working in any indoor area that is open to the public and where they're likely to come into contact with a member of the public. This includes:

- shops
- supermarkets
- bars
- pubs
- restaurants
- cafes
- banks
- estate agents
- post offices
- public areas of hotels and hostels

If these businesses have taken steps in line with Health and Safety Executive guidance for COVID-19 secure workplaces to create a physical barrier between workers and members of the public, then staff behind the barrier will not be required to wear a face covering.

For other indoor settings, employers should assess the use of face coverings on a case-by-case basis depending on the workplace environment, other appropriate mitigations they have put in place, and whether exemptions or reasonable excuses apply.

Employees should continue to follow guidance from their employer based on a workplace health and safety assessment.

For recommendations and requirements in specific settings please check the government's workplace settings guidance.

Exemption cards

If you have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering:

you do not routinely need to show any written evidence of this

you do not need show an exemption card

This means that you do not need to seek advice or request a letter from a medical professional about your reason for not wearing a face covering.

However, some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign.

Carrying an exemption card or badge is a personal choice and is not required by law.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE USE THE LINKS BELOW

<https://www.gov.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/search/all?keywords=facemasks&order=relevance>