



Face Masks Questions & Answers

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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

Requirement to Wear Face Masks and Social Distance at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Projects

Why am I required to wear a mask?

On January 20, 2021 President Joe Biden signed Executive Order (EO) 13991, Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing. The EO “requires compliance with CDC guidelines with respect to wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and other public health measures by on-duty or on-site Federal employees; on-site Federal contractors; and all persons in Federal buildings or on Federal lands. This means that any person entering a Federal building or entering



federal lands must comply with the CDC guidance. The CDC guidance requires masks to be worn while inside any Federal building and outside when social distancing is difficult or not possible. By complying with the CDC guidance, we are all doing our part to halt the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). ***The best available data and science-based public health measures indicate wearing face masks may protect you from droplets when a person with COVID-19 coughs, speaks, or sneezes and you are less than six-feet away from them. Wearing a mask will also help protect others if you are infected with the virus, whether or not you have symptoms.***

Who will be required to wear a mask?

Every person age 2 and older is required to wear a mask on properties and lands controlled by the federal government — including U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recreation projects — when physical distancing of six feet or greater cannot be maintained.

When and where are masks required? Masks are required to be worn while inside any building or structure including visitor centers, lobbies, offices, comfort stations, bathhouses, etc. While outdoors, masks are required when social distancing of six feet or more is difficult or not possible. This may include when hiking on trails that may be popular or crowded.

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Are there any exceptions to wearing a mask?

Exceptions include (1) among individuals that cohabitate; (2) when in outdoor spaces where social distancing of six feet or greater can be maintained; (3) people actively engaged in water-based activities wherein the mask will almost certainly get wet. Other general exceptions include (1) when an individual is alone in an office with floor-to-ceiling walls with a closed door; (2) for brief periods of time when eating and drinking while maintaining distancing of six feet or greater; (3) when the mask is required to be lowered briefly for identification or security purposes; and (4) when necessary to reasonably accommodate an individual with a medical disability.

Can I wear a face shield or bandana instead of a mask?

Neither face shields, nor bandanas will be permitted as a substitute for masks. Novelty/non-protective masks and masks with ventilation valves are also not permitted. Masks must comply with the CDC guidance including: (1) Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric; (2) Completely cover your nose and mouth; (3) Fit snugly against the sides of your face without gaps; and (4) Have a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask.

What are the rules regarding social distancing?

Social distancing of six feet or more should be maintained even when wearing a mask.

Are there any exceptions to social distancing?

Exceptions include (1) among individuals that cohabitate; (2) riding on elevators; (3) situations that make social distancing difficult or impractical such as when hiking on trails that may be crowded or rendering lifesaving first aid.

What if I refuse to wear a mask or social distance within a USACE recreation project?

Staff will remind people that everyone age 2 and older is required to wear a mask and that everyone is required to social distance. Everyone will be given the opportunity to comply and those persons refusing to comply will be asked to leave the location in which they are putting others at risk. Those who refuse to wear masks or social distance may be issued a citation and asked to leave the USACE recreation project. The goal, however, is to ensure that everyone who chooses to visit a USACE recreation project can do so as safely as possible. Staff will take into consideration the exceptions listed in this FAQ.

Do I still have to wear a mask at USACE recreation areas if there is no mask mandate in my state?

Since Executive Order (EO) 13991, Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing applies to federal lands, and USACE recreation areas are composed of federal land and federal buildings, everyone age 2 and older is required to wear a mask while visiting USACE recreation areas even if there is no mask mandate in your state.

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What are some examples of activities at USACE recreation projects that don't require masking?

- Outdoors when physical distancing of six feet or greater can be maintained.
- Actively engaging in watersports wherein the mask is almost certain to get wet. Masks can become heavy when wet and that makes breathing difficult.
- Rescuing a distressed swimmer.
- Performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or some other vital first aid to a person in distress.
- Evacuating due to a life-threatening emergency.
- When an individual is alone in an office with floor-to-ceiling walls with a closed door.
- Brief periods of time when eating and drinking while maintaining distancing of six feet or greater.
- When the mask is required to be lowered briefly for identification or security purposes.
- When necessary to reasonably accommodate an individual with a medical disability.

I have received the vaccination; do I still need to wear a mask?

Yes. While the vast majority of people who are vaccinated will be protected from Covid-19, the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, vaccinated people may still be able to transmit the virus to others when they cough, speak, or sneeze, even though they do not display any symptoms. Wearing a mask and social distancing are effective risk-mitigation strategies.

Where can I get more information:

Additional health communication resources, including those concerning outdoor recreation, are available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/index.html>

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