

Florida Emergency Rule August 2023

Standards for the Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection Control Policy

I. INTRODUCTION

To ensure the health and safety of our patients, employees, and visitors, face masks will be required under special circumstances, such as when a patient, visitor, or employee is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission.

This policy applies to all patients, visitors, and employees two years of age and older. Facial covering and other PPE recommendations and/or requirements may be reviewed and reassessed with national and state standards, and state and federal laws, rules, requirements, and regulations in the event of a community outbreak.

The standards and protocols in this Policy will govern in the event that the Hospital encourages or requires the use of facial coverings at any of its Locations. Unless otherwise noted, all other Hospital policies, procedures, and guidance that encourage or require the use of facial coverings are subject to the standards, protocols, and provisions herein.

This Policy does **not apply** to the use of personal protective equipment that are recommended and/or required for chemical or physical hazards.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Locations – Any of the Hospital owned or affiliated hospitals, campuses, facilities, premises, and locations.
- B. Patients – Any person receiving treatment, care, or other services from the hospital or any of its wholly owned or affiliated subsidiaries at any of the Hospital Locations.
- C. Team Members – Any person that is a hospital employee, volunteer, student, resident, independent contractor, vendor, member of the Board of Hospital, or any other person who provides any care, treatment, or other services (including clinical staff and physicians) to Hospital and/or patients of Hospital at any of the Hospital Locations, or any of Hospital's wholly owned or affiliated subsidiaries.
- D. Professional Staff Members – Any person who is an appointee to the Professional Staff at any of the Hospital affiliated hospitals, including Allied Health Professionals, Medical Staff, Associate Staff, Locum Tenens, and any other person or provider with permanent or temporary privileges at any of the Hospital affiliated hospitals who provides any care, treatment, or other services for Hospital and/or patients of Hospital, any of the Hospital affiliated hospitals, or any of Hospital's wholly owned subsidiaries.
- E. Visitors – Any person visiting any of the Hospital Locations that is not a Patient, Team Member, or Professional Staff Member.
- F. Masks – Any cloth or surgical face mask, a face shield, or any other facial covering that covers the

mouth and nose that is compliant with the hospital's current masking guidelines.

III. PROTOCOLS & PROCEDURE

- A. Patients. In the event that the hospital requires the use of facial coverings, Patients may be required to wear a Mask in the common areas of the hospital locations if the patient is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission.
- B. Visitors should avoid entering the facility if they are sick. In the event that the hospital requires the use of facial coverings, Visitors may be required to wear a Facial covering if the Visitor is:
 - 1. Exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission.
 - 2. In any sterile area of a Hospital Location, including where surgeries or procedures that require aseptic techniques are performed
 - 3. In an in-patient or clinical room with a Patient who is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission; or
 - 4. Visiting a Patient (i) whose treating health care provider has diagnosed the Patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner which is known to increase the risk of transmission of an infection to the Patient from others without signs or symptoms of infection; and (ii) whose treating provider has determined that the use of a Facial covering is necessary for the Patient's safety.
- C. Employees. Employees should avoid entering the facility if they are sick. Employees who are sick should contact their immediate supervisor and the Employee Health Department. Employees will be required to wear an FDA certified medical/surgical mask (ASTM F2100) or NIOSH-approved respirator if they ARE:
 - 1. Conducting sterile procedures,
 - 2. Working in a sterile area,
 - 3. Working with a patient whose treating health care practitioner has diagnosed the patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner which is known to increase risk of transmission of an infection from employees without signs or symptoms of infection to a patient and whose treating practitioner has determined that the use of facial coverings is necessary for the patient's safety,
 - 4. With a patient on droplet or airborne isolation, or
 - 5. Engaging in non-clinical potentially hazardous activities that require facial coverings to prevent physical injury or harm in accordance with industry standards.
- D. Generally, the hospital reserves the right to require the use of Facial coverings at the hospital locations in other circumstances consistent with national and state standards, and state and federal

laws, rules, requirements, and regulations.

IV. OPT-OUT OF FACIAL COVERING PROCEDURES

In the event that Hospital encourages or requires the use of Facial coverings at any of its locations, then visitors, Patients, Team Members and Professional Staff Members may opt-out from wearing Facial coverings as follows:

- A. If an alternative method of infection control is available, Patients and Visitors may opt-out of any existing facial covering requirements by notifying a provider, and such requests will be reviewed consistent with Hospital's infection control procedures.
- B. Employees **may opt out** of any facial covering requirements by Human Resources and such requests will be reviewed by Human Resources, Employee Health and Infection Prevention.

Notwithstanding the opt-out provisions herein, in the event that Hospital requires the use of facial coverings at any of its locations, the following exclusions shall apply:

- A. If there are no alternative methods of infection control or infectious disease prevention, a patient may **not opt-out** of any facial covering requirements in the following circumstances:
 - 1. A patient has been diagnosed or is exhibiting signs or symptoms of an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission;
 - 2. Opting out has been identified by a provider as being medically or programmatically contraindicated for medical, safety or programmatic issues; or
 - 3. Opting-out would otherwise infringe on the rights and would risk the safety or health of other patients, individuals or staff/employees of the hospital
- B. If there are no alternative methods of infection control or infectious disease prevention, a visitor **may not** opt-out of any Facial covering requirements in the following circumstances:
 - 1. The visitor has been diagnosed or is exhibiting signs or symptoms of an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission;
 - 2. Opting-out would otherwise infringe on the rights and would risk the safety or health of other patients, individuals, or staff/employees of Hospital; or
 - 3. There are no alternative methods of infection control or infectious disease prevention.
- C. An employee may **not opt-out** of any facial covering requirements if the employee is:
 - 1. Conducting a sterile procedure, including aseptic procedures or surgeries, that call for practices that minimize the risk of microbial contamination to reduce the rate of invasive or surgical site infection;
 - 2. Caring for a patient or being present while sterile procedures are being performed, including aseptic procedures or surgeries;

3. Working in a sterile area of any Hospital Location, including where surgeries or procedures that require aseptic techniques are performed;
 4. With a patient who is on droplet or airborne isolation;
 5. Working with a patient whose treating health care provider has diagnosed the patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner which is known to increase the risk of transmission of an infection to the patient from others without signs or symptoms of infection; and (ii) whose treating provider has determined that the use of a Facial covering is necessary for the Patient's safety; or
 6. Engaging in potentially hazardous activities that require a facial covering to prevent infection, injury or harm in accordance with national, state, and industry standards, and state and federal laws, rules, requirements, and regulations.
- D. The hospital reserves the right to consider other exclusions from the opt-out provisions in order to comply with applicable state and federal laws, rules, requirements and regulations.

V. DISPLAY AND PUBLICATION

A copy of this document is displayed on the home internet page of this facility.

VI. REFERENCES

- A. [Fla. Stat. § 408.824 \(SB 252\)](#)
- B. Fla. Stat. § 381.026 (Florida Patient Bill of Rights)
- C. Fla. Admin. Code 59AER23-1 (Definitions Rule)
- D. Fla. Admin. Code 59AER23-2 (Standards Rule)
- E. OSHA Rules
 1. Bloodborne Pathogens (29 CFR 1910.1030)
 2. Personal Protective Equipment (29 CFR 1910. 132)
 3. Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1910. 134)
- F. Conditions of Participation Infection Control Worksheet – See tag 1.A.3. – “The Infection Control Officer(s) can provide evidence that the hospital has developed general infection control policies and procedures that are based on nationally recognized guidelines and applicable state and federal law.”
- G. Joint Commission
 1. Hospital Respiratory Protection: Resources and Projects | The Joint Commission
 2. Hospital Respiratory Protection Program Toolkit ([osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov))
- H. CDC Prevention strategies for Seasonal Influenza in Healthcare Settings: Guidelines and Recommendations.