

LEGISLATIVE FACE MASK POLICY

1/12/22: DRAFT amendments for Joint Rules Committee discussion

All individuals over two years of age entering legislative spaces in the Capitol Complex, including the State House, 1 Baldwin St., 2 Aiken Ave., and 4 Aiken Ave., and other locations being used for legislative purposes (including study committees, task forces, and panels composed of at least one member of the General Assembly) shall wear a facial covering (mask), regardless of vaccination status. The facial covering shall:

- (1) completely cover the individual's nose and mouth;
- (2) be a medical procedure or surgical mask, or be similarly made of multiple layers of non-woven polypropylene material; an N95, KN95, KF94, or similar grade mask; or a more protective grade mask;
- (3) be secured to the head with ties, ear loops, or elastic bands that go behind the individual's head; and
- (4) fit snugly over the nose, mouth, and chin with no large gaps at the sides of the face.

Other facial coverings made of cloth and facial coverings that have any slits, exhalation valves, visible holes, or punctures are prohibited. Member masks shall conform to the chambers' custom of prohibiting props in debate.

Individuals who do not comply with this policy will be asked to leave, and may be escorted from the location by the Sergeant at Arms or Capitol Police if noncompliance continues. The Sergeant at Arms and/or Capitol Police is authorized to escort a member of a committee upon a Chair's request or a Chair may choose to not to recognize a member of the committee until that member is in compliance with the facial covering policy.

Individuals with a medical condition that prevents the safe use of a facial covering, and individuals seeking a religious exemption from this policy shall notify the Sergeant at Arms of the need for such exemption. The Sergeant at Arms shall require a note from a medical professional indicating the need for a medical exemption, or documentation indicating the reason for request of religious exemption, before granting any appropriate exemptions. When an individual is granted a facial covering exemption,

either for medical or religious purposes, proof of a negative COVID antigen (rapid) test taken within 72 hours provided by the Office of Sergeant at Arms shall be required for entrance into a legislative space. Those who cannot provide proof of such a recent negative COVID test shall be permitted to participate in proceedings remotely, except when otherwise prohibited by Rule.

Facial coverings may only be removed while eating or drinking in the cafeteria, eating a member's designated committee room, or in a private office, or when an individual is alone ~~or with other members of their department in a non-public area of the State House and all present in the room agree that they are comfortable with others removing their facial coverings~~ in a room with a closed door in a legislative space. In all instances when facial coverings are not being worn, effort should be made to ensure appropriate distance is maintained between individuals, and to replace facial coverings as soon as practicable.

This policy shall take effect 24 hours after its approval by the Joint Rules Committee, and shall remain in effect until ~~all counties in Vermont are identified as being in a location with "low or moderate transmission risk" as defined by the CDC or until~~ otherwise provided by the Joint Rules Committee. Notice of the requirement to wear a facial covering shall be conspicuous, appear on the legislative webpage, and be posted by the Sergeant at Arms as soon as practicable in the affected spaces.