Hello all,

Please see the important information in this release from the Vermont Health Department. For all our agricultural related businesses that are essential there are new requirements for covering your mouth and nose. Please read the information below and help us help you to stay safe in the agricultural community.

For businesses in operation now, employees must wear non-medical cloth face coverings (bandanna, scarf, or non-medical mask, etc.) over their nose and mouth when in the presence of others, according to new guidelines from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Please pass along to interested parties.

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Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 By Wearing a Cloth Face Mask

BURLINGTON, VT – As the state begins taking measured steps toward re-opening, it is more important than ever to make wearing cloth face coverings a habit whenever we leave home – and to be sure to wear them the right way.

Recent data has revealed more about how the virus can spread, even before a person shows any symptoms. Droplets produced when you breathe, speak, or clear your throat can spread COVID-19 from person to person. Since you may be infected and not know it, wearing a face covering helps protect people around you from exposure to the virus.

Wearing a face covering is only one of the things we all must do to prevent the spread of the virus. We all still need to stay at least 6 feet away from people, even when wearing a mask, practice good hand hygiene and follow the state’s Stay Home, Stay Safe guidance.

“When we’re all taking these essential precautions, we’re all a little safer,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. “Wearing a face covering can take some getting used to, but this may be the new normal for some time. So, help protect your loved ones and your fellow Vermonters by wearing a face covering and knowing how to do so properly.”

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. These types of masks are critical supplies that must be reserved for health care workers and first responders.

For businesses in operation now, employees must wear non-medical cloth face coverings (bandanna, scarf, or non-medical mask, etc.) over their nose and mouth when in the presence of others, according to new guidelines from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

When using a face mask or covering:

Your mask should include multiple layers of fabric and allow for breathing without restriction.

The face covering must be worn properly to be effective and avoid the spread of germs:

- Wash your hands before putting it on.
- Be sure your mouth and nose are covered.
- Hook loops around your ears or tie it snugly.
- Do not touch the mask or pull it down while in public.
- Keep it on until you get home.
• Remove the mask without touching your eyes, nose or mouth, then wash your hands immediately.

• Wash the mask and make sure it’s completely dry before using again. Have a few on hand so you can rotate for washing.

**Some people should never wear a mask, including:**
• Children under the age of 2
• Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious
• Anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance

**How can I get a cloth face covering?**
1. **Make one:** The Centers for Disease Control has instructions on [making your own coverings](https://www.cdc.gov). In several different methods, including machine or hand-sewn, a no-sew method with a t-shirt and scissors, and a no-sew method with a bandanna.

2. **Buy one:** Find a list of places at [vem.vermont.gov/covid19/facecovering](vem.vermont.gov/covid19/facecovering)

3. **Reach out to your community.** Check out places like Front Porch Forum to connect with other Vermonters making masks.

Read our full guidance on [cloth face masks](https://healthvermont.gov) and [get up to date information about the pandemic](https://healthvermont.gov/covid19).

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*We have been the state's public health agency for more than 130 years, working every day to protect and promote the health of Vermonters.*
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