

May 13, 2020 – Face Shield Instructions

On April 21, 2020, the Postal Service made the decision to align our employee policy with state and local ordinances which implemented CDC recommendations by requiring face coverings where social distancing or other protective measures cannot be implemented and maintained.

The new policy dictates that if there is a state or local ordinance in place mandating the wearing of face coverings, Postal Service employees are required to wear face coverings in those jurisdictions. Face coverings include both Postal Service provided disposable masks and reusable cloth face coverings, as well as personal face coverings which employees may wish to use while on duty. Employees are also required to wear face coverings whenever social distancing practices (six feet from others) cannot be properly maintained, regardless of whether there is a local or state order in place.

Recently we have been asked what to do in situations where an employee indicates that they cannot wear face coverings, including masks, due to health reasons. As guidance, we are directing employees that fall into this category to discuss the matter with their supervisor. The supervisor should then confer with the local Occupational Health Nurse (OHNA) regarding a reasonable accommodation. The District Reasonable Accommodation Committee (DRAC) can also review if additional assistance is needed to determine whether an accommodation should be made. Your local OHNA or DRAC will review the specifics of the employee and their work and make the appropriate decision on the accommodation being offered.

One example of a reasonable accommodation that we are seeing being requested is a plastic face shield. This is a potential accommodation but there are others that should be considered as well and should not be the default accommodation in all instances.

Supply Management has arranged for a bulk purchase of these face shields and will be shipping out 15 -20 face shields per district in case your OHNA or DRAC feels it is appropriate. If you require additional supplies of these items, your OHNA or Disability Compliance Specialist will be the only authorized purchaser. We are limiting these items for purchase, because they are not a replacement for cloth face coverings or masks and do not offer the same amount of protection against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). They should only be provided when there is a medical reason that cloth face coverings or masks cannot be worn by an employee and it is determined by the OHNA or the DRAC that a face shield is warranted as a reasonable accommodation.