May 18, 2020

TO: All DOC Employees

FROM: DOC COVID-19 Medical Team

SUBJECT: Proper Use of Face Coverings and Masks

It has been just over one month since all employees began wearing mandatory face coverings or routine-use masks while at work. We want to take a moment to highlight some of the do’s and don’ts around this practice.

For face coverings and routine-use masks to be effective in preventing transmission, they must be used correctly. Here are a few tips to remember when wearing your face covering or routine-use mask:

- Face coverings and routine-use face masks should only be taken off during meal times and when 6 feet from the closest person.
- They should not be removed or pulled down for talking, snacking, singing, whistling, coughing or any other similar activity.
- Proper hand hygiene is necessary anytime you touch your face-covering or routine-use mask.

Additionally, we want to provide you with information about ‘vented’ masks. These vent style masks have a built-in plastic circle or square vent with slats. The masks allow the wearer to avoid inhaling particulate matter, while allowing easier exhalation. However, because the mask allows free exhalation, it eliminates the protection of others around you and during an infectious pandemic the goal is to protect yourself and others through the use of a face covering or mask.

The Emergency Operations Center has developed the attached posters to provide tips and visuals on proper face covering and routine mask use. Please do not print posters for distribution within your work location. Large print posters are currently in production and will be distributed statewide in the coming weeks.

We thank you for your support in adjusting to this new normal for the agency and our community.

“Working Together for SAFER Communities”
EXPERT TIPS for Routine-Use Face Coverings

For proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in medical isolation or quarantine settings, please refer to the DOC PPE Matrix and DOC Proper Use of PPE video.

- Clean hands before and after touching FACE COVERING.
- Place FACE COVERING on and press metal piece to fit nose (if applicable).
- Avoid Touching FACE COVERING.
- FACE COVERING should not hang on one ear, hang around neck or be pushed to forehead.
- Remove and store FACE COVERING before eating and drinking, and at end of shift.
- Wash FACE COVERING if it becomes wet or soiled.

FACE COVERING should always cover nose and chin.
Universal Face Coverings

Correct use of face coverings is key in preventing transmission.

Practice proper hand hygiene when taking on and off, or adjusting face covering.

Face covering is on or off, there is no in-between.

NO! Pocket Protectors
NO! Chin Strap
NO! Looping Ties or Crossed Straps
NO! Sneaking Snacks
NO! One Ear Hanging
NO! Straps Hanging
NO! Nose Out
NO! Neck Wear
NO! Pocket Protectors

YES! Over Nose and Mouth
YES! Fit Nose Piece
YES! Required in All Areas
YES! Off and Stored for Breaks
YES! Physical Distance as Possible
YES! Over Nose and Mouth
YES! Required in All Areas
YES! Over Nose and Mouth

Department of Corrections
Washington State