



Bureau of Labor Relations and Employee Safety

SAFETY GRAM # 192 (UPDATE #2) – APR 16, 2020 – SURGICAL MASKS & FACE COVERING FOR COVID-19

Executive Order 202.17 requires individuals to use “a mask or cloth face covering when in a public place and unable to maintain, or when not maintaining, social distance...” In compliance with E.O. 202.17, all staff physically reporting to work are to have a mask or cloth face covering available and to wear such mask or face covering whenever maintaining appropriate social distancing may not be possible. For certain titles and situations as indicated below, when available, the Authority will continue providing surgical style masks.

- The wearing of a surgical or cloth mask does not eliminate the requirements of social distancing or any other required COVID-19 precautions. Staff are to continue to follow all current Authority, DOH and CDC guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- Masks or face coverings are not respirators like the N95, rather they are intended to prevent the individual from spreading the COVID-19 virus. These masks do not replace the use of a respirator for non-COVID-19 related tasks. No respiratory fit testing or medical clearance is required prior to use of a surgical masks, cloth mask, or face covering.
- In accordance with the criteria below and surgical mask availability, staff choosing to wear the provided surgical mask will be issued one mask daily. Use of provided surgical masks when available, or a personal cloth mask is required by Toll Collection staff working in a toll booth and by any other staff expected to have direct contact with the public. Available surgical masks will be issued in the following order:

Priority 1: Toll Collectors and other staff expected to have direct contact with the public, staff in the Thruway Statewide Operations Center (TSOC), security staff at the GMMCB, and ITSM and other staff engaged in the installation or repair of equipment that requires two or more employees working together in close proximity or confined quarters.

Priority 2: Field Maintenance staff engaged in tasks requiring two or more employees working together at the same time in close proximity.

- **All staff must have a mask or cloth face covering available at all times while on duty and use such mask or cloth face covering whenever appropriate social distancing may not be possible.**

How to use the masks:

- Before putting on or removing a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water
- Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask
- Avoid touching the mask while using it
- Remove the mask whenever you break for meals or smoking
- Remove it from behind by the straps (do not touch the front of mask) to avoid touching your face
- Discard when no longer needed for the day or it becomes grossly contaminated
- Never cut or modify the mask in any way

Additional resources can be found at: www.who.int

Contact: Bureau of Labor Relations and Employee Safety at (518) 471- 4495 with any questions.