

Face Covering Updates and FAQs – May 2021

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released updated mask guidance for fully vaccinated individuals, stating **“Fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.”**

An important change with this announcement is that the FVCC face covering requirement transitioned to a recommendation, which has raised questions from our campus community.

With less than 40% of Montanans vaccinated, FVCC’s face covering requirement is the only change taking place at this time. All other FVCC COVID safety protocols remain in place. The COVID Quick Response Team (QRT) is actively working to revisit these protocols and updates to the policy, coronavirus website and related FAQs are underway.

Per CDC guidelines, we recommend that unvaccinated individuals and individuals who are not fully vaccinated continue to wear face coverings when in close contact from others. Though face coverings are no longer required in most areas of campus, there may be situations where individuals feel more comfortable wearing a mask.

Consider wearing masks as a precaution when returning to campus from out-of-area travel, if you’ve recently attended a large event, or if there’s a possibility you’ve been exposed to COVID-19. For these reasons, keep a mask available in case you need one or if someone requests that you wear one. Likewise, please respect the decisions of others to continue wearing masks if they choose to do so. They may be doing it to protect you!

The Student Health Center and other health care facilities may continue to require masks on their premises.

In the interim, here are a few FAQs to answer some of the common questions we received:

1. If people are not wearing a face covering, are we allowed to ask if they are fully vaccinated?

No, we are not able to request an individual’s vaccination status per the Governor’s [Executive Order 7-2021](#). Since we are unable to know who is vaccinated and who is not vaccinated, we must rely on the honor and integrity of individuals.

We encourage all members of our campus community to continue to take safety precautions, including continuing to wear face coverings, based on what is best for their health and personal or professional situations.

We acknowledge the honor system may not hold individuals accountable for wearing face coverings according to the CDC guidelines. We encourage all supervisors/instructors to review with their staff/students the CDC guidelines and definition of [fully vaccinated](#) to ensure everyone is fully informed of the college’s expectations.

2. Will new signage for buildings and doors be provided?

Since the CDC changes occurred on a national level with widespread media coverage and public attention, campus wide signage will not be distributed.

There may be unique situations on campus when individuals may still be requested to wear face coverings. For example, an employee in the workplace is undergoing medical treatment or is immune compromised and may want to request others to voluntarily wear a face covering. Please be respectful in assisting individuals facing these difficult circumstances.

Employees or supervisors may consult with the COVID QRT regarding appropriate communication in these situations.

3. How is our new directive being communicated to guests that visit our campus?

This information will be available on the FVCC website and distributed through our newsletters. Additionally, employees working with guests, student groups, or venues should convey the CDC recommendations for face coverings in advance and have masks readily available.

Following is a sample script: *As a campus we are following CDC guidelines regarding face coverings to protect our campus community. If you or your group are not fully vaccinated, face coverings should be utilized. We will have some available for your use.*

4. Where do I address specific questions that have not been addressed?

As an organization we are providing our best informed guidance as possible. At this time we are reiterating broadly distributed national guidance, as it pertains specifically to our campus community. Please reach out to the COVID QRT at covid@fvcc.edu for assistance with questions not addressed above.

As changes develop, we will communicate with the campus community. The COVID QRT will continue to review questions and updates to CDC guidance that impacts the college.