

Mask Guidance for Highway Contract Route (HCR) and Contract Delivery Service (CDS) Suppliers

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States has continued to increase. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Nationally, levels of influenza-like illness (ILI) and COVID-19-like illness (CLI) . . . are increasing in most regions,” as are “[t]he percentage of specimens testing positive for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19[.]”¹ In order to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the CDC “recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings when around people outside of their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.”² “The spread of COVID-19 can be reduced when cloth face coverings are used along with other preventative measures, including social distancing, frequent handwashing, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.”³

In addition to CDC recommendations, multiple state and local jurisdictions now require the wearing of face coverings in a variety of circumstances, such as when indoors or when social distancing is not possible.

HCR and CDS suppliers’ contracts require them to comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, executive orders, rules and regulations applicable to their performance. Where state and local jurisdictions have mandated that face coverings be worn in certain situations, the Postal Service voluntarily follows those mandates. Where not mandated by state or local law, the Postal Service mandates face coverings whenever employees are unable to achieve or maintain social distancing. Suppliers must provide masks for themselves and their own employees. The Postal Service does not provide them for suppliers.

HCR and CDS suppliers must comply with state and local requirements regarding face coverings when applicable. Where state and local requirements do not require face coverings, HCR and CDS suppliers must comply with Postal Service policy to wear face coverings whenever they are unable to achieve or maintain social distancing, for example, while casing mail, working on loading docks, or otherwise interacting with others and unable to social distance.

Supplier personnel must also comply with all health and safety-related directions received from the contracting officer and the Administrative Official at any facilities where they perform their work.

The Postal Service is requiring that HCR and CDS suppliers communicate this guidance to their employees and subcontractors, if applicable. These measures are being taken to ensure the safety of both Postal Service employees and the supplier’s personnel.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Weekly Surveillance Summary of U.S. COVID-19 Activity*, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html> (July 3, 2020).

² CDC, *About Cloth Face Coverings*, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html> (June 28, 2020).

³ *Id.*