

WHEN IS A FACE COVERING NOT REQUIRED?

In settings where face coverings are required in England, there are some circumstances, for health, age or equality reasons, where people are not expected to wear face coverings. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

It is not compulsory for shop or supermarket staff or transport workers to wear face coverings (see section 6), although employers may consider their use where appropriate and where other mitigations are not in place. Employers should continue to follow [COVID-19 Secure guidelines](#) to reduce the proximity and duration of contact between employees.

EXEMPTIONS

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to. This includes (but is not limited to):

- **young children under the age of 11** (Public Health England do not recommended face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
- not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of **a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability**

- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you **severe distress**
- if you are travelling with or **providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading** to communicate
- **to avoid harm or injury**, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others
- to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you
- **to eat or drink** if reasonably necessary
- in order **to take medication**
- if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering

WHEN COULD YOU BE ASKED TO REMOVE A FACE COVERING:

- if asked to do so in a bank, building society, or post office for identification
- if asked to do so by shop staff or relevant employees for identification, the purpose of assessing health recommendations, such as a pharmacist, or for age identification purposes including when buying age restricted products such as alcohol
- if speaking with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound. Some may ask you, either verbally or in writing, to remove a covering to help with communication

EXEMPTION CARDS

Some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign.

This is a personal choice and is not necessary in law.

Those who have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering should not be routinely asked to give any written evidence of this. Written evidence includes exemption cards.

[Access exemption card templates](#)

The public are asked to be mindful of people who are exempt from wearing a face covering. The [list of exemptions](#), which has been in place since face coverings became mandatory on public transport, includes hidden conditions such as anxiety or panic disorders, autism, breathing difficulties, dementia, reduced vision or if you are with someone who relies on lip reading to communicate.

Source: Cabinet Office

Date: Friday 24th July