

Exceptions for not wearing a face covering

Lawful excuses or exceptions for not wearing a face covering

A face covering is not required in some circumstances including:

- Infants and children under the age of 12 years.
- A person who is affected by a relevant medical condition, including problems with their breathing, a serious condition of the face, a disability or a mental health condition.
- Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to that person's health and safety related to their work, as determined through OH&S guidelines.
- Persons whose professions require clear enunciation or visibility of their mouth. This includes teaching or live broadcasting.
- Professional sportspeople when training or competing.
- If you are working on your own property with members of your household, but no staff or contractors are on site.
- When you are doing any exercise or physical activity where you are out of breath or puffing. Examples include jogging or running, but not walking. You must carry a face covering on you and wear it when you finish exercising.
- When directed to remove the face covering to ascertain identity.
- When you are travelling in a vehicle by yourself or with other members of your household.
- When consuming food, drink or medication, including when seated at a restaurant where permitted.
- When undergoing dental treatment or other medical care to the extent that the procedure requires that no face covering may be worn.
- During emergencies.

You must carry a face covering with you when leaving home, even if you don't need to wear it while undertaking your current activity. For example, you can take your face covering off to eat or while you are running, but you must carry it with you and put it back on when you finish.

I have a medical condition that prevents me from wearing a face covering, do I need a medical certificate stating I don't need to wear a face covering?

You do not need a medical certificate stating that you have a lawful reason for not wearing a face covering. If you have a lawful reason for not wearing a face covering, you do not need to apply for an exemption or permit.

If you are stopped by police, they will ask you to confirm the lawful reason you are not wearing a face covering.

Do I have to wear a face covering if I have asthma?

People with asthma or people who have a medical condition that includes problems with their breathing, do not have to wear face coverings.

Do people with a disability have to wear a face covering?

Yes, people with a disability must wear a face covering unless it is unsuitable to do so for medical, physical, communication or other individual risk factors.

Do residents of aged care facilities and other group homes need to wear face coverings at all times?

The requirement to wear face coverings applies when people are outside of their home. It does not apply to aged care residents or other group home residents while they are in the facility. However, it does apply to the facility's staff and visitors, and when a resident leaves the facility.

What about people who have experienced trauma that makes it difficult for them to wear a face covering?

Some people who have past experiences of trauma are unable to wear a face covering due to psychological impacts. This is a valid reason not to wear or carry a face covering when you leave home.

What if I need to leave home as I fear for my safety or the safety of my children due to a family violence situation?

You do not have to wear a face covering when leaving home to seek emergency support and assistance because you or your children are escaping harm or are at risk of harm from family violence. If you are stopped by police, tell them you are feeling unsafe at home and they will help you.

Family violence frontline services, including crisis accommodation, continue to operate to support women, children and families during the coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency.

There are options for accessing safe housing if you need to leave a violent situation or you are not safe in your home.

Call safe steps on 1800 015 188 or email safesteps@safesteps.org.au for help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For more info visit [Family violence support during coronavirus](#).

What about people who need to leave home in an emergency?

People who need to leave home in an emergency do not need to wear a face covering.

Can I take my face covering off if someone I am communicating with can't hear me?

You can remove your face covering if you are communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.

You should maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres and if you need to cough or sneeze, do so into a tissue or your elbow. while keeping your face covering on