

**TITLE: Masking (Facial Coverings)**

**LOCATIONS:**

All     Downtown     North     Offsite EDs     Offsite Clinics

**POLICY:** Patients, Employees, and Visitors will be required to wear masks under special circumstances to prevent the spread of infection through droplet or airborne transmission. This policy applies to all Patients, Visitors, and Employees two years of age and older. Facial coverings and other personal protective equipment (PPE) recommendations and/or requirements may be reviewed and reassessed with national and state standards, and state and federal laws, rules, requirements, and regulations in the event of a community outbreak. This Policy does not apply to the use of personal protective equipment that are recommended and/or required for chemical or physical hazards.

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. **Employee** - For the purpose of this policy, any person under employment, contract, or grant of clinical privileges of the hospital, including but not limited to healthcare practitioners, administrative staff, maintenance staff, aides, contractors, students, and volunteers.
2. **Hospital** – Shands Jacksonville Medical Center, Inc., dba UF Health Jacksonville, UF Health North and all offsite locations.
3. **Mask**- Any cloth or surgical face mask, a face shield, or any other facial covering that covers the mouth and nose that is compliant with the Hospital’s current masking guidelines.
4. **Patients** – Any person receiving treatment, care, or other services from the Hospital.
5. **Provider**- Treating Physician, Physician Assistant, or Nurse Practitioner.
6. **Visitors** – Any person visiting any of the Hospital locations that is not a Patient, Team Member, or Professional Staff Member.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. **Patients**- In the event that the Hospital requires the use of Masks, Patients may be required to wear a mask in the common areas of the Hospital locations if the Patient is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission.
2. **Visitors**- In the event the Hospital requires the use of Masks, Visitors may be required to wear a Mask if the Visitor is:
  - A. Exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission;

- B. In any sterile area of a Hospital location, including where surgeries or procedures that require aseptic techniques are performed;
  - C. In an in-patient or clinical room with a Patient who is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission; or
  - D. Visiting a Patient (i) whose Provider has diagnosed the Patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner which is known to increase the risk of transmission of an infection to the Patient from others without signs or symptoms of infection; and (ii) whose Provider has determined that the use of a facial covering is necessary for the Patient's safety.
3. **Employees-** Employees should avoid entering the facility if they are sick. Employees who are sick should follow the [Time and Attendance policy HR-02-007](#). Employees will be required to wear an FDA-certified medical/surgical mask or NIOSH-approved respirator if they are:
- 1. Conducting sterile procedures,
  - 2. Working in a sterile area,
  - 3. Working with a patient whose treating health care practitioner has diagnosed the patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner which is known to increase risk of transmission of an infection from Employees without signs or symptoms of infection to a patient and whose treating practitioner has determined that the use of masks is necessary for the patient's safety,
  - 4. With a patient on droplet or airborne isolation, or
  - 5. Engaging in non-clinical potentially hazardous activities that require Masks to prevent physical injury or harm in accordance with industry standards.
4. **General-** the Hospital reserves the right to require the use of Masks at the Hospital locations in other circumstances consistent with national and state standards, and state and federal laws, rules, requirements, and regulations.
5. **Masking Opt-out** - In the event that the Hospital encourages or requires the use of Masks at any of its locations, then Visitors, Patients, and Employees may opt-out from wearing Masks as follows:
- A. Patients: may opt-out from wearing a Mask provided there are alternative means for infection control. Patients will be provided the same respect, level of medical care, and information as any other patient at the Hospital pursuant to the Patients' bill of rights under Florida law.
  - B. Visitors: may opt-out of any existing Mask requirements by notifying an Employee, and the request will be reviewed by applying the Hospital's infection control procedures to determine if an alternative method of infection control or infectious disease prevention is available.
  - C. Employees may opt-out of any Mask requirement, unless the employee is:
    - 1. Conducting a sterile procedure, including aseptic procedures or surgeries, that call for practices that minimize the risk of microbial contamination to reduce the rate of invasive or surgical site infection;

2. Caring for a Patient or being present while sterile procedures are being performed, including aseptic procedures or surgeries;
  3. Working in a sterile area of any Hospital location, including where surgeries or procedures that require aseptic techniques are performed;
  4. With a Patient who is on droplet or airborne isolation;
  5. Working (i) with a Patient whose Provider has diagnosed the patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner which is known to increase the risk of transmission of an infection to the Patient from others without signs or symptoms of infection; and (ii) whose Provider has determined that the use of a Mask is necessary for the Patient's safety; or
  6. Engaging in non-clinical potentially hazardous activities that require a Mask to prevent infection, injury or harm in accordance with national, state, and industry standards, and state and federal laws, rules, requirements, and regulations.
6. **Alternative Methods/Exclusions-** Notwithstanding the opt-out provisions herein, in the event that the Hospital requires the use of Masks at any of its locations, the following exclusions shall apply:
- A. If there are no alternative methods of infection control, a Patient **may not** opt-out of any Mask requirements in the following circumstances:
    1. A Patient has been diagnosed or is exhibiting signs or symptoms of an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission;
    2. Opting-out has been identified by a Provider as being contraindicated for medical or safety issues; or
    3. Opting-out would otherwise infringe on the rights and would risk the safety or health of other Patients, individuals or staff/employees of Hospital.
  - B. If there are no alternative methods of infection control, a Visitor **may not** opt-out of any Mask requirements in the following circumstances:
    1. The Visitor has been diagnosed or is exhibiting signs or symptoms of an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission;
    2. Opting-out would otherwise infringe on the rights and would risk the safety or health of other Patients, individuals, or staff/employees of Hospital; or
  - C. The Hospital reserves the right to consider other exclusions from the opt-out provisions in order to comply with applicable state and federal laws, rules, requirements and regulations.

**REFERENCES:**

Fla. Stat. § 408.824 ([SB 252](#))

Fla. Stat. § 381.026 ([Florida Patient Bill of Rights](#))

Fla. Admin. Code 59AER23-1 ([Definitions Rule](#))

Fla. Admin. Code 59AER23-2 ([Standards Rule](#))

OSHA Rules

1. Bloodborne Pathogens ([29 CFR 1910.1030](#))
2. Personal Protective Equipment ([29 CFR 1910. 132](#))
3. Respiratory Protection ([29 CFR 1910. 134](#))

[Conditions of Participation Infection Control Worksheet](#) – See tag 1.A.3. – “The Infection Control Officer(s) can provide evidence that the hospital has developed general infection control policies and procedures that are based on nationally recognized guidelines and applicable state and federal law.”

Joint Commission

1. [Hospital Respiratory Protection: Resources and Projects | The Joint Commission](#)
2. [Hospital Respiratory Protection Program Toolkit \(osha.gov\)](#)

[CDC Prevention strategies for Seasonal Influenza in Healthcare Settings: Guidelines and Recommendations](#)

**APPROVED BY:**

**Legal Services July 2023**