

Exemptions to wearing face masks/coverings in England

In settings where face coverings are mandated in England, there are some circumstances, for health, age or equality reasons, whereby people are not expected to wear face coverings in these settings. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings.

It is not compulsory for shop or supermarket staff to wear face coverings, although employers should consider recommending their use where appropriate and where other mitigations are not in place. For example, there will be times when screens or visors are in use, or when a staff member is not in close proximity to people they do not normally meet, and so wearing a covering for staff will not be necessary. Employers should continue to follow [COVID-19 secure guidelines](#) to reduce the proximity and duration of contact between employees.

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to. This includes:

- young children under the age of 11
- 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, but only if you need to
- to take medication
- if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering

There are also scenarios when you are permitted to remove a face covering when asked:

- If asked to do so by shop staff for the purpose of age identification
- 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

**I am exempt
from wearing
a face
covering.**



Exemption cards to download, print or add to your mobile phone are available from the government website (please use the link below)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>