

SUNY Maritime College Face Covering Policy

As SUNY Maritime College re-starts on-campus operations and academic programs, our focus remains on the health, safety, and welfare of all students, staff, and faculty. While we cannot guarantee a risk-free environment, we are fully committed to reducing risk. Key in this effort is wearing effective face coverings.

In our commitment to minimize exposure to COVID-19, the College will provide students and employees with face masks that meet CDC requirements. The CDC reviewed the latest science and affirmed that cloth face coverings are a critical tool in the fight against COVID-19 and that using a cloth face-covering reduces the spread of the disease, particularly when used universally within communities.

The success of our recent Pierside Shipboard Training program is a testament to this practice. Over five weeks, we conducted 422 tests with five positive results (1.2%). Of particular note, all five positive results were in the first week, with no positive results in the succeeding four weeks of testing. The program's success can be attributed to wearing face masks, frequent hand washing, avoiding face touching, and social distancing.

Although the College is providing each employee and student with face masks, you may elect to wear your own face mask if you find the College-issued face mask uncomfortable. Again, the key is 100% compliance – everyone must wear a face mask while on campus. If you choose to wear a face mask that is not provided by the College, make sure you consider the characteristics of the material used, the number of layers, size of the pores in the fabric, and the fit to the face. Masks with three or more layers of 100% cotton or high cotton content are the most effective. Based on a recent study conducted by Duke School of Medicine researchers, bandanas, fleeces, and gaiters are the least effective. Some were shown to be more harmful than not wearing a mask. They are unacceptable substitutes for proper face coverings, offering little protection and as such they are not allowed in community settings (classrooms, labs, and mess deck).

According to our campus re-start plan, face masks/coverings must be worn on campus at all times by students, staff, faculty, staff, and visitors. The only time students are not required to wear a mask is when inside their room with their roommate. Faculty and staff are expected to wear a mask anytime they are outside their office. In offices, face masks must be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained. Face masks must also be worn at all customer-servicing points. Additional guidance will be promulgated regarding the face covering requirements while exercising outdoors and inside athletic and fitness facilities, as well as by the Regiment of Cadets.

The health and safety of students, faculty, and staff are of paramount importance, and ***we each hold a shared responsibility as members of this campus community to protect ourselves and one another***. We look to students, faculty, and staff to do their part in minimizing their risk of exposure of COVID-19 on and off-campus by properly wearing face masks, and practicing social distancing and good hygiene. In doing so, we reduce the risk of COVID-19 impacting our campus and protect the health of our students and employees, giving students the opportunity to achieve the academic milestones required for graduation.