

10 tips for talking to customers about FACE COVERINGS

- 1. State the compliance standard simply and kindly at first exchange.** Use a friendly, assertive tone to make the customer aware of the rule as soon as possible.
- 2. Listen and provide acknowledgement.** Letting customers know you are listening creates a sense of mutual respect.
- 3. Establish the law, not you, as the authority.** Focus on the requirement being mandated by the law, not you or your employer.
- 4. Avoid encouraging unnecessary conversation.** Refrain from asking questions or offering personal opinions.
- 5. Avoid “you” statements,** which can imply blame and lead to defensiveness or escalation.
- 6. Avoid “I” statements,** which position you as the authority. Use “We” statements to reiterate that this is a policy you do not control.
- 7. Convey confidence:** Make eye contact and hold a firm, open stance with upright posture; avoid saying “I’m sorry” and/or crossing your arms.
- 8. Maintain physical distance:** Protect your physical safety by keeping 6 feet of space between yourself and others. Do not use your body as a barrier to block customer entry or movement.
- 9. Generally, private businesses may refuse service for any reason except as may be prohibited by law.** Examples of prohibited reasons for refusing service include refusal of service due to a protected characteristic (e.g., race, gender identity, religion, and so forth).
- 10. If you feel unsafe,** find a manager, security or call 911. Prioritize your immediate safety over enforcing the face covering requirement.

Find more details at
prosperportland.us/wecare

Examples
on back ➡

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TRY SAYING THIS

“Welcome! In accordance with state law, we require face coverings.”

Customer

“ I forgot my mask.

Employee Response

No problem, it happens! We’re providing free face coverings—please help yourself to one.

OR

No problem, it happens! You’re welcome to visit us another time when you have your mask.

“ I have a medical exemption.

We understand—if wearing a face covering poses a health risk to you, we ask that you [describe reasonable accommodations for individuals with legitimate medical exemptions].

“ I can’t afford a mask.

No problem—we understand. We offer [contactless pickup, delivery, etc.] for those without face coverings.

“ But I’m already here, and I’ll make it quick.

Not complying with the law puts our business and the health of everyone here at risk. If you are unwilling to wear a face covering, we cannot legally accept your business at this time. We have to ask you to leave.

“ I’m not leaving & I’m not going to wear a mask.

We will not serve you without a face covering. If you refuse to leave, [security, the authorities, our staff, etc.] will be called to escort you out.

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This document is based on guidance provided by the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon OSHA, and is not intended to be legal advice. For specific questions regarding compliance with government directives regarding COVID-19, face coverings, and physical distancing, please consult your legal counsel or visit the OHA or Oregon OSHA websites.

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