This fact sheet is intended to provide guidance on the use and care of reusable cloth face coverings.

Please note that food service workers may have additional requirements for the use of face coverings and should refer to the Cloth Face Coverings/Cloth Masks: Food Service Operations document for specific guidance.

- As of May 6th, 2020 all people in Massachusetts are required to wear a face covering or mask in public places where maintaining proper social distancing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are not possible. As of April 29, 2020 Cambridge, and Somerville have issued emergency orders requiring face coverings to be worn in all public places, businesses and common areas of residential buildings. The CDC recommends cloth face coverings for the general public, to be worn when outside the home in public settings. These are also recommended for use in situations where social distancing practices are difficult to maintain. Examples of this include while traveling to and from work in public spaces, when interacting with customers, when working in proximity to someone, and while performing work tasks.

- Face coverings do not eliminate the need for physical distancing (6 feet), proper handwashing, and staying home when sick. These coverings are not considered occupational Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). In some cases, the job task requirement for PPE (e.g. NFPA 70E
balaclava, face shields, hoods) will supersede and replace the need for face coverings. Check with your Supervisor/Manager.

- Medical/surgical face masks are in short supply and should be reserved for, and primarily used by, healthcare and Emergency Response workers in healthcare settings. Avoid use of medical/surgical face masks as a face covering; only work tasks with a specific protocol require the use of a medical/surgical mask at Harvard.

**Cloth Face Coverings: Fabric and Fit**

- While there is no clear consensus or standard for the most effective materials to use for a face covering, the key is that any multi-layered fabric will stop some droplets. The CDC has noted that cotton t-shirts, bedsheets, sweatshirts and bandanas are all appropriate materials.

- How well your face covering fits is influenced by the design of the covering, and by how each individual adjusts it and wears it during their activities. It must be snug enough on sides, top and bottom to prevent exhaled air from escaping without going through the fabric layers.

- Coverings should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face, placed over the nose and be secured with ties or ear loops.

- Coverings should allow for breathing without restriction; if breathing becomes labored, or difficult remove the covering.

- Check for air escaping around the top, sides or bottom of the mask after donning:
1. After donning the face covering, blow out of your mouth, and then nose.

2. Each time you blow, check with your hands to feel if you can sense air bypassing the cloth mask, and escaping through the sides, bottom, or top of the covering.

3. Adjust as needed to prevent as much air by-pass as possible, so that air must travel through the covering instead.

Cloth Face Coverings: Use and Care

- Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water every time you put on and take off the face covering. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing face covering.

- Coverings should be changed out/replaced if they become wet or soiled; do not put a used face covering in places where others can touch them or where germs trapped in your face covering can touch other surfaces, such as counter tops. Keep a paper bag with you to store your face covering if you will be taking it off when outside the house.

- Coverings should be laundered with detergent and machine dried.