



# Litter Cleanup in a COVID-19 Environment



KEEP AMERICA  
BEAUTIFUL

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## Table of Contents

Purpose .....	3
Litter Cleanup Activities – Safety First.....	3
Appendix .....	5
* Surface “Stability” of Covid-19.....	5
** Removing Gloves Safely -- DO NOT LITTER .....	6
*** How to clean and disinfect .....	7
**** Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of Covid-19.....	8
No Sew Methods .....	9
Tutorial.....	9
Six Steps to a cloth reusable mask .....	11
Sewn Cloth Face Covering .....	12
Materials .....	12

## Purpose:

This document is designed to provide guidance to individuals wishing to pick up trash and litter in their community. First and foremost, thank you for beautifying your neighborhood and community by picking up trash and litter – your safety is of utmost concern to us and should be your primary consideration when deciding if it is safe to pick up litter.

Is it OK to volunteer and pick up litter in my community? This is a personal decision that only you can make, and the following will identify factors that you should consider and exercise when making your decision:

## Litter Cleanup Activities – Safety First

1. Keep yourself safe – Wear a safety vest and make sure you pay attention to traffic and other conditions around you while collecting litter or trash.
2. Avoid personal injury – Only pick up litter or trash that you can individually manage. Don't exceed your physical weight lifting limitations. Report finding any hazardous materials, weapons, or medical waste to local officials for their safe removal.
3. Stay Hydrated and Energized – Single-serve packaging of food and water is appropriate at this time. If using disposable cups filled from refillable containers, make sure disinfectant wipes are available and used to wipe off the water spigot/handle or outside of refillable containers between users. Keep in mind single-use gloves are not effective unless changed prior to each activity.
4. Physical Distance – Keep a minimum of six feet away from others, unless you live or work with them on a regular basis, while picking up litter. As shelter-in-place orders are lifted, the need for physical distancing is critical to stem off a resurgence of COVID-19.
5. Minimize physical contact with litter\* – It is best to use some type of litter grabber and/or protective work gloves to protect yourself from cuts, scrapes, and any contaminant that may be on the collected litter or trash.
6. Keep your hands away from your face – During and after collecting litter, do not touch your face with gloved hands or hands that have not been washed and sanitized.
7. Secure the collected materials – In an abundance of extreme caution, secure the collected litter in closable plastic bags or a trash container with a secure lid. Try to minimize the handling and transfer of the materials collected. COVID-19 is spread primarily via airborne particles, and anyone transferring materials in bulk from one container to another should take extra precautions to not come in contact with airborne particles, e.g. wear a mask\*\*\*\*, wash hands thoroughly, and don't touch clothing and then your face.
8. Post-Cleanup Activities
  - a. If you used any litter collection equipment, e.g. litter grabber or bucket, wipe with a disinfectant\*\*\* cloth/wipe prior to storage.
  - b. Carefully remove gloves\*\* and other protective clothing. If you plan on reusing your safety vest, gloves, and other clothing, sanitize them by washing them in a washer with regular detergent and cleaning cycles.
  - c. Wash and sanitize your hands

## Appendix:

### \* Surface “Stability” of COVID-19

As reported in The New England Journal of Medicine, researchers analyzed the aerosol and surface stability of COVID-19. As an aerosol, the researchers noted that the virus remained viable for 3 hours, e.g. transferred droplets from sneezing, coughing, etc. The chart below indicates the duration the virus remains viable on some common surfaces:

Surface Type	Viability of Virus in Hours	Viability of Virus in Days
Copper	Up to 4 hours	Less than 1 day
Clothing	Several hours up to 24	Up to 1 day
Cardboard	Up to 24 hours	Up to 1 day
Plastic	Up to 72 hours	Up to 3 days
Stainless Steel	Up to 72 hours	Up to 3 days
Glass Surface, e.g. smartphone	Up to 96 hours	Up to 4 days



Personal protective equipment, commonly referred to as PPE includes face masks, single use gloves, and disinfectant wipes. Below are some recommendations for keeping you safe while picking up PPE litter.

- Since the PPE was irresponsibly littered you should assume it is contaminated.
- To minimize physical contact with the littered PPE, use a litter collection device such as a litter grabber, broom/shovel, litter stick, etc. to carefully pick up the PPE and place into a collection container. Don't have a litter grabber? Consider using an old kitchen tong that you can dedicate to litter collection.
- In an abundance of caution or if you don't have work gloves or access to a litter collection device, carry a spray bottle of disinfectant. Prior to handling the littered PPE spray it with the disinfectant, let sit for the recommended time on the label, and then pick-up the "treated" PPE.
- If using single use gloves, pick-up the PPE, place it in a litter collection container, and then remove your single-use gloves and dispose immediately after picking up the PPE. Be sure to follow the proper method of glove removal and disposal – see below. Replace your gloves if you plan to continue to pick up litter.
- Properly collected PPE should be disposed in litter collection bags/containers and placed into a proper trash can. PPE is considered municipal solid waste and does not need to be disposed of as medical waste.
- Immediately after picking up the littered PPE, wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer. Repeat when finishing your litter collection activities.
- If you encounter any medical or hazardous waste, firearms, or explosives report the location to local authorities and have them remove the littered items.

## How to Remove Single Use Gloves

1. Grip one glove on the outside of the glove near the cuff.
2. Peel it down until it comes off inside out.
3. Cup the removed glove with your gloved hand.
4. Place fingers from your bare hand inside the cuff of the glove that you have on. Be sure to not touch any damp or contaminated areas of the glove.
5. Peel that glove off so that it comes off inside out, touching only the inside of the glove you are removing keeping the other glove inside it.
6. Dispose of the gloves in a trash container.
7. Wash your hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.



### \*\*\* How to clean and disinfect<sup>3</sup>

#### Clean

- Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.
- Clean surfaces using soap and water.
- Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. High-touch surfaces include tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

#### Disinfect

- Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use a household disinfectant with one of the following:

Household Disinfectant: Recommend use of [EPA-registered household disinfectant](#). Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.

Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.

Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used if appropriate for the surface.

- Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection, and ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening, may not be suitable for disinfection.
- Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
  - Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation.
  - Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
  - Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute.
- To make a bleach solution, mix:
  - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of waterOR
  - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

When using any of the above disinfectants, keep in mind many products recommend:

- Keeping surfaces wet for a period of time (see product label); and
- Taking safety precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation while using the products.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>

#### \*\*\*\* Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

The [CDC recommends](#) wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.<sup>4</sup>

The CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2 or on anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Cloth face coverings should be routinely washed depending upon the frequency of use. A standard wash cycle in a washing machine is enough to sterilize a cloth face covering.

Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their face covering and wash hands immediately after removing.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

## No Sew Methods

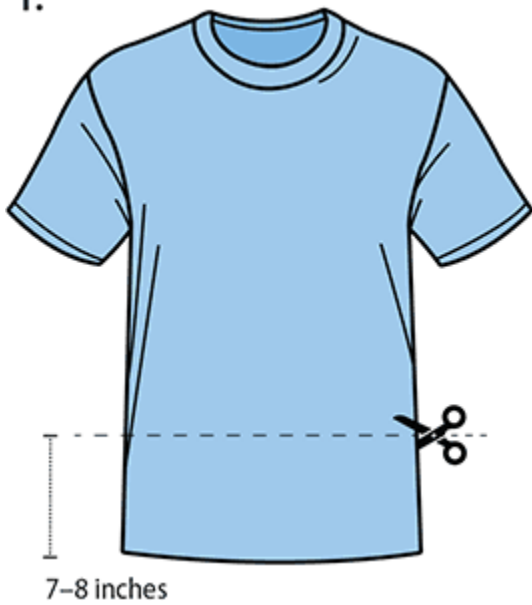
### Quick Cut T-shirt Face Covering (no sew method)

#### Materials

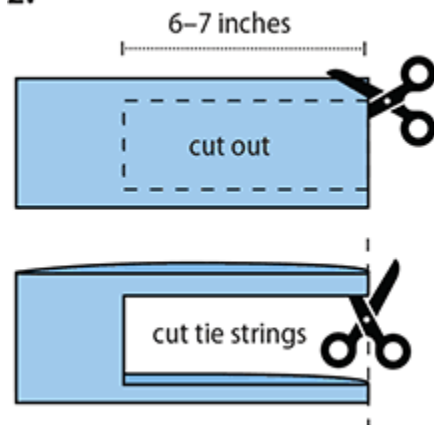
- T-shirt
- Scissors

#### Tutorial

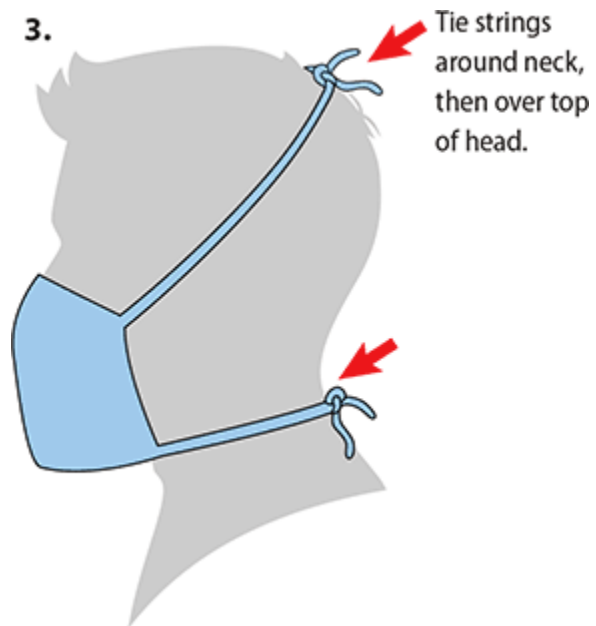
1.



2.



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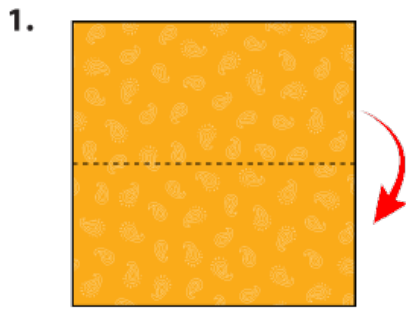


## Bandana Face Covering (no sew method)

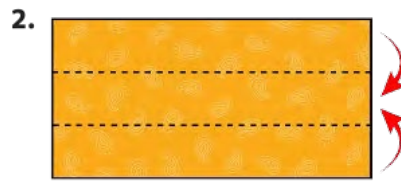
### Materials

- Bandana (or square cotton cloth approximately 20"x20")
- Rubber bands (or hair ties)
- Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)

### Six steps to a cloth reusable mask



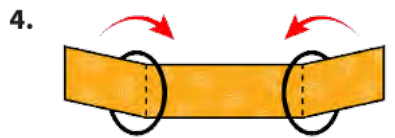
Fold bandana in half.



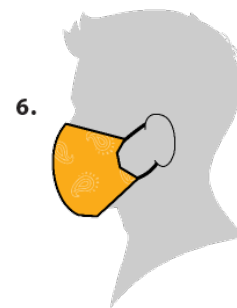
Fold top down. Fold bottom up.



Place rubber bands or hair ties about 6 inches apart.



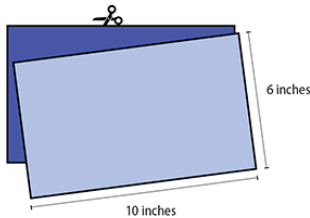
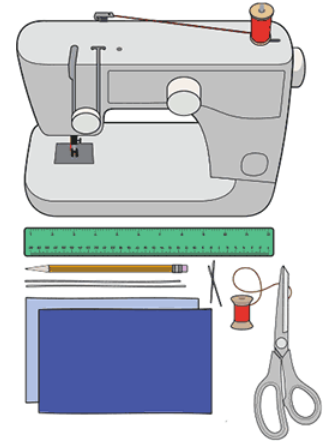
Fold side to the middle and tuck.



## Sewn Cloth Face Covering

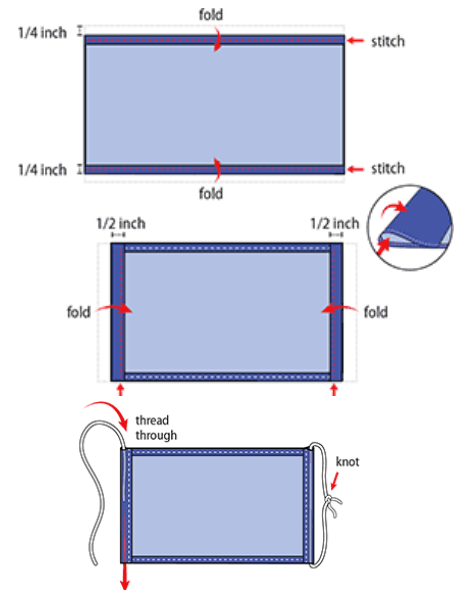
### Materials

- Two 10"x6" rectangles of cotton fabric
- Two 6" pieces of elastic (or rubber bands, string, cloth strips, or hair ties)
- Needle and thread (or bobby pin)
- Scissors
- Sewing machine

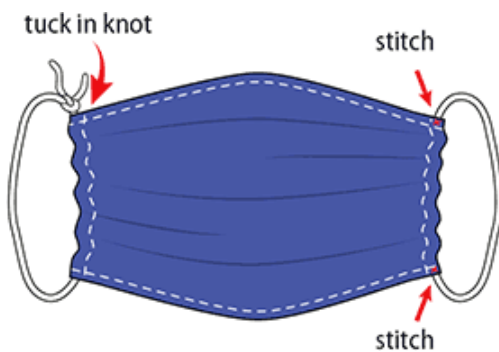


1. Cut out two 10-by-6-inch rectangles of cotton fabric. Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets. T-shirt fabric will work in a pinch. Stack the two rectangles; you will sew the mask as if it was a single piece of fabric.

2. Fold over the long sides  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch and hem. Then fold the double layer of fabric over  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch along the short sides and stitch down.



3. Run a 6-inch length of  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch wide elastic through the wider hem on each side of the mask. These will be the ear loops. Use a large needle or a bobby pin to thread it through. Tie the ends tight. Don't have elastic? Use hair ties or elastic head bands. If you only have string, you can make the ties longer and tie the mask behind your head.



4. Gently pull on the elastic so that the knots are tucked inside the hem. Gather the sides of the mask on the elastic and adjust so the mask fits your face. Then securely stitch the elastic in place to keep it from slipping.