

Face mask exemption on public transport and in shops

These rules don't apply to children under the age of 11 and disabled people or those with health conditions when there is a '[reasonable excuse](#)' not to.

This includes:

- **Where you cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering:**
- Without severe distress.
- Because of any physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability (within the meaning of [section 6 of the Equality Act 2010](#)).
- Where you are travelling with, or providing assistance to, another person who relies on lip-reading to communicate.
- To eat or drink where it is reasonably necessary to do so.
- Where you have to remove your face covering to take medication.

To put this into context, exemptions apply if you have a disability or condition that would make it very difficult to wear a face covering.

For example, if you have respiratory condition, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, you may find it too difficult to breathe through a face covering.

If you have a learning difficulty, sensory processing disorder or neurodivergent condition, wearing a mask could be too overwhelming.

If you have communication difficulties, speech impairment or find it hard to express yourself with a mask on, especially if you are non-verbal, a mask would be difficult.

Mask exemptions also apply if you need to communicate with a deaf person who lip-reads.

This list is not exhaustive and there will be many other disabilities, including invisible ones, that would make wearing a mask very difficult.

[Other exemptions apply](#) to some transport workers and other specific situations.

The government has also **strongly advised** that people wear face coverings in other enclosed spaces, such as hospitals, where social distancing can't be achieved. Our guide to [PPE explained](#) has more details.

Government guidelines listed above mean that you can now **self-certify as being exempt**.

To ensure that you don't get fined when you're genuinely exempt for medical reasons, we've created an exemption card.

Our mask exemption card comes on a lanyard or badge clip. It is a durable, portable pass that you can wear around your neck or pinned to your coat or top while travelling.

It provides drivers and staff with immediate and simple-to-understand information regarding your mask exemption.

The bright red lanyard has 'MASK EXEMPT' written in white capital letters so it is easy to see. The credit card-sized ID badge further explains your mask exemption as being due to a "disability/health condition". Both can be seen and read at a safe distance.

There is also the option to purchase the ID card with a badge clip instead of a lanyard, which can be worn on shirts, tops or coats.

The pocket-sized design of the ID, badge clip and lanyard means it can be stored in your coat or bag making it easy to access and put around your neck or pin to you while travelling.

The badge costs just £2.95, the lanyard £3.95 and for it is £4.95 for both.

By Disability Horizons