Masks and Face Shields

General Considerations

When people wear face masks/shields, they do not provide optimal access to speech, lipreading or facial expressions that individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing rely on for effective communication. Although clear face masks allow individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing to see more of the user's face, it still degrades and distorts the speech signal similar to that of opaque masks, and non-manual markers on the face that are a crucial component of American Sign Language may still be obstructed. If wearing a clear panel face mask, users will need to make sure that it is anti-fog or treated with an anti-fog solution.

Clear face shields allow for the entire face to be seen, however, they may not prevent particulates from entering the mouth and nose when in close proximity of an individual with the same effectiveness as a regular face mask.

Clear panel masks and clear shields provide an auxiliary aid to help medical facilities and schools meet the "Effective Communication" requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Informational Resources

⇒ World Health Organization (WHO): Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19
⇒ ASHA: Masks Pose Barriers for People with Hearing Loss
⇒ How do medical masks degrade speech reception
⇒ Phonak Audiology Blog: The Masking Dilemma
⇒ A tricky combination: Face masks, hearing loss and hearing aids
⇒ Face masks are a challenge for people with hearing difficulties
⇒ General overview, DIY, masks to order, comfort accessories

Clear Masks and Shields for Purchase

★ **Rapid Response PPE**
★ **Crosstex**
★ **InstaShield**
★ **Safe 'N' Clear**
★ **The Clear Mask**
★ **The Hearing Spot**
★ **ADCO Hearing Products**
★ **Brand It Shop**
★ **Sabryna's Sewing Styles**
★ **FaceView Mask**

Additional Resources

★ **DIY Face Mask instructions**
★ **Hearing Aid Saver Bands**
★ **Antifog solution: Quick Spit**
★ **Antifog solution: Hockey Spit**
★ **Strategies to keep clear windows from fogging up**

Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education

www.cdhhe.isdh.in.gov

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