

# HOW TO AVOID Mask Challenges

## TIPS FOR HAMILTON COUNTY HOSPITALITY EMPLOYEES

Mask wearing is pretty much a “thing” these days, but there are still conflicts. As the pandemic drags on, this may escalate. We’ve researched a few tips to help your front-line employees facing “mask challenges.”

### COMMUNICATE EARLY & OFTEN

Ensure your entrances are well marked with notifications about mask compliance.

### WATCH HOW YOU SAY IT

#### What you say is important and can help diffuse the situation.

“Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the \_\_\_\_\_ here. We don’t know if you noticed, but there are signs requiring our guests to wear masks (insert individual business compliance, e.g. to and from tables, etc.) We know this is an inconvenience, but we are meeting state mandated requirements, and we also want to keep you, our other guests and our employees safe.”

#### Let them have grace and an opportunity to reconsider compliance.

“We have masks available to you if that would be helpful. Or perhaps you would be interested in being seated outside?”

#### And finally, if they won’t comply, depending on your company’s adherence to the policy:

“We understand how you feel, but perhaps our business is not the best option for you at this time.”

## TIPS

#### Diffuse the Situation with Space & Voice Tone

1. Keep a distance from the guest and manage that distance even if they step toward you to allow you to fully understand what’s going on.
2. If the individual is moving in closer, this will indicate how much respect they want to show you – the closer, the less respect of boundaries.
3. Listen to the tone of voice for frustration, generally indicated by the level of speaking. Use an even level of voice to diffuse the situation if possible.
4. Watch what words you use if the person’s frustration seems to be escalating and he is refusing to comply.
5. Watch what their arms and hands are doing and again, maintain a respectful distance to allow you space to move should they reach out to harm you.

#### Determine a Company’s Adherence to Policy

What is your company’s policy for non-compliance? Make that clear and empower your front-line employees with that knowledge.

- Call a manager for back-up?
- Tell the guest they must leave if they won’t use an outside option if available?
- Tell the guest you will need to call the police if they are creating a scene and won’t leave?

Whatever your company’s policy is regarding escalating customer mask situations, make sure you fully understand it, memorize it and follow it closely even as situations become stressful.