



WEEKLY SANE-ITIZER



Grande Prairie
Volunteer
Services Bureau

**Helpful information for Not-for-Profits,
Individuals and Businesses during the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

As Alberta enters stage 1 of their relaunch strategy and non-essential businesses start to reopen it's a good time to remind the public to continue to 'flatten the curve' so we don't experience a second wave of outbreaks and have to go back into lockdown.

Remember to practice the 5 ways to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:



Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Businesses may ask customers/clients to wash/sanitize hands before entering and leaving.



Sneeze or cough into your bent elbow or a tissue. Dispose of tissue immediately and wash your hands.



Avoid touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose and mouth to prevent the virus from entering your body.



Stay more than 2 metres or 6 feet from others & avoid Large gatherings of people (gatherings of more than 15 people is still not permitted) Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering while out in public is optional. Some businesses may require customers/clients to wear masks.



If you feel unwell, stay home & self isolate. If you have a fever, cough & difficulty breathing, or any other known COVID-19 symptoms call 811 and seek medical attention. Businesses may ask customers/clients/employees to leave if they appear to be ill or have visible symptoms.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD (Source: BMO Customer Service)

Cybercriminals are capitalizing on the interest in the COVID-19 pandemic by sending emails, phone calls, texts and social media messages that contain phishing links, malicious attachments or fake information. They are impersonating governments, health authorities and other organizations.

Protect yourself against these scams by knowing what to look for and what to do.

How to identify a potential scam

- If you have been advised that you are the winner of a large prize for a draw you don't recall entering.
- Communications that you are late in a payment and services will be cut off or legal action will be taken.
- Communications are not personalized and contain grammatical errors or spelling mistakes.

How to protect yourself from scams

- Don't open emails or click on links from unlikely senders.
- Never send money to a charity without first checking that it is legitimate.
- Don't buy items online from companies you don't know and trust.
- Be wary of texts claiming to come from the government or your bank.

Never provide any financial or personal identifiable information in email or text.



The Employer's Kitchen

– creating ideas just for you!



We've reached the 2-month mark and there's been change, heartache, laughter, tears and fears. As a country we have lost over 5,000 people from the Coronavirus, that we know of. We are looking at a national debt of close to \$3,000,000,000,000. The unemployment rate is at the highest level in recorded history and a second wave is an almost certainty.

So, what's the good news? The curve is flattening: and though we mourn those lost, we know that it could have been a whole lot worse. Our elected officials pulled together: the nastiness and 'Americanised' style of political polarization receded. Monetary support was made and is still being made available to those who need it. Parents realized they either have little angels or not! The border to the south of us is still closed. And we all stop (or we should) and sing O Canada, Sundays at noon.

This week the news is all about a tentative restart of opening up businesses and services. This can be a frightening prospect and slightly overwhelming as no one can safely predict what tomorrow will look like.

The key as an employer is to ensure that your staff and your customer base is safe and protected as much as possible from the nasty little bug. Be cautious and smart about your relaunch and be vigilant about the information that your are relying on. In short, do some critical thinking, have a plan and have a back-up plan.

For workplaces operating in Alberta please access <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-workplace-guidance-for-business-owners.pdf> for assistance on ensuring that you are ready to reopen your doors.

Prior to re-opening there is a government requirement for all workplaces to develop and implement policies and procedures for Screening, Hygiene, Cleaning & Disinfecting, Personal Protective Equipment, Workplace bathrooms and showers, Distancing and Gathering in the Workplace and Sick Staff and Volunteers. If you are a registered society or non-profit and require assistance with writing your policies the GPVSB may be able to assist you. Please give us a call.



Industries or business with specialized operations or aspects may be subject to additional guidance. (please check government websites.)

COVID-19: 6 key questions on the return to work

By [John Dujay](https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/compensation-and-benefits/covid-19-6-key-questions-on-the-return-to-work/328961) (source: <https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/compensation-and-benefits/covid-19-6-key-questions-on-the-return-to-work/328961>)

One day the coronavirus outbreak will end and, en masse, millions of remote employees will be returning to the workplace they knew before. But what should legal considerations should employers focus on in the transition back to the workplace? Sara Kauder, senior employment lawyer at Minken Employment Lawyers in Unionville, Ont. shared some insights with Canadian HR Reporter.

How should workers on temporary layoffs be recalled back to work?

“Employers will have to assess when the time is right to recall them but, of course, there are certain parameters and timeframes set out in the Employment Standards Act; if they go beyond that, then it becomes a termination.

“Obviously, they’re going to have to look at the financial situation and the health of the company and determine what employees can be recalled, how many, what time; it might need to be staggered depending on the business.

“It might be necessary to recall some but not others; it might be a situation where hard choices are required and terminations may become necessary, in which case there’s going to be the analysis of the termination obligations to these employees. Do you want to have a staggered return to work to make sure that material supplies and all of that is ready so that employees can be productive when the time comes to return to work?

“Employers also want to make sure that confidential information, all company property, is brought back into the workplace because employees have accumulated a lot of data, a lot of company property, and it needs to get back to the workplace.”

Can a reduction of hours and pay become a permanent change?

“Employers are going to have a hard time maintaining that going forward unless they can demonstrate that they’re continuing to suffer, because if it does extend beyond the emergency provisions and restrictions that have been set out by the government, employers are going to be at risk for potential constructive-dismissal claims.

“Something that could potentially be impacted — depending on how much of a reduction there are in the number of hours — will be things like benefits because some benefits are only for full-time employees and not part-time employees.

“If an employee was a full-time employee, but because of COVID they became a part-time employee, the employer might have been able to make an arrangement with the insurance company

whereby full benefits would be maintained. But if the reduced hours is going to be maintained, that could then become an issue with the insurance company; it might impact the benefits that the employee has, but it shouldn’t change their overall status.

“They would still be considered an employee, and whether they’re a part-time or a full-time employee, it wouldn’t affect a lot of the protections under the Employment Standards Act or notice entitlements.”

What if an employee was moved into a new role and wants to stay there?

“One thing that an employer would want to think about is whether or not there needs to be changes to an employment agreement to reflect that new position. If compensation is changed, or hours or responsibilities, those are things that may not have been papered as a result of COVID because it was meant to be a temporary measure. But where it’s going to become permanent, employers should think about making those changes more formal and implementing a revised employment agreement or contract if one is already in place.

“If one isn’t in place, it might be a good opportunity for employers to put those types of things in place, [and] they might want to add things like termination clause, non-compete, non-solicits. If those things were not in place before, sometimes it can be risky to slide those things with a change of position if there’s no additional compensation that’s being provided.”

What if an employee refuses to come back to work because they think it’s not safe?

“Employers have to provide a safe working environment under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. An employee can refuse to return to work if they can prove that it’s unsafe or that it’s likely to be unsafe.”

“But if the employer has done what needs to be done to make the place safe, then an employee would potentially be in a risky situation by refusing to return if they don’t have strong grounds to do so and that could be viewed as an abandonment of employment or resignation.

“Certainly, a deep cleaning is something that is a good idea and for businesses that have been closed, a deep cleaning should probably be sufficient. But if we’re talking about a situation where there’s still active cases and there’s cause for concern, then that’s a different story, because then the employer is going to have address those concerns.

“We might see a situation where some of these remote work-from-home arrangements may continue in some shape or form because there may be legitimate cause for concern that the immediacy of COVID will not have passed by the time businesses are opening up again. There’s constant talk about a resurgence or a second wave and there’s going to be heightened awareness and heightened sensitivity to that. That is something that employers are going to have to take into consideration and it might be a situation where more interactions with the public with suppliers, customers, are done remotely even for an ongoing basis.”

What if an employee wants to keep working remotely?

“An employer is not obligated to honour that request but it’s a reasonable ask and if there’s a concern about minimizing contacts between employees, even when the situation is better, it might make sense to have rotating situations where some of the week employees are in the workplace.

“But an employer should realistically analyze the request and if it is a situation where it is possible for an employee to work remotely, then they may want to consider having some sort of flex arrangement -- maybe not a situation where all of a sudden the employee is going to 100 per cent be working from home, but it may open the door for a discussion whereby one day a week [is done from home] or there can be a greater amount of flexibility.”

“One of the things that is that is going to come out of this COVID situation is that a lot of businesses can function with workers working remotely; it may not be the way things were done in the past and it may not always be the ideal situation, but this is going to show that a lot of people are able to do that. The world is going to be very different when all this is over. And, when you have a bunch of people all working in cubicles next to each other, we may have to rethink how that works.”

What if an employee has family issues that require accommodation?

“Employers do have a duty to accommodate up to the point of undue hardship. There are certain protected grounds and family responsibilities, childcare, health issues, whether it’s their own or for a family member, those are all things that can trigger the employer’s duty to accommodate.

“Employers need to take those requests more seriously and need to make sure that they are doing their due diligence to investigate: Is there a potential human rights aspect to this request? And is it reasonable to accommodate it in light of those unique circumstances facing that particular employee?”

Transitioning Back to Work in a Post-COVID-19 World

- The following information was gathered from: ‘Site Selection Group’

1. Install sanitization stations throughout the office, especially in high traffic areas.
2. Provide wayfinding on the ground to encourage 6-foot social distancing and to establish one-way travel paths to eliminate back-and-forth traffic.
3. Prop open or remove entry doors into the office and office doors within the workspace (if possible) to eliminate the need to touch a door handle when entering and exiting the space.
4. Provide additional cleaning services throughout the day. This will help to ease employees’ concerns if they see that their workplace is being cleaned. Also, have your entire office space sanitized weekly or twice a week.
5. Introduce a phased-in approach for employees coming back into the office.
6. Install wipeable covers and have additional cleaning supplies in workrooms and breakrooms for an employee to use prior to and after touching copy machines, supplies, microwaves, refrigerators, etc.
7. Have hand sanitizers, sanitizer wipes, disposable placemats and masks at each workstation or desk.
8. Stop receiving personal deliveries of food and packages. Designate a spot outside the office space for deliveries to be dropped off and sanitized prior to entering the office.
9. Reduce capacity in conference rooms, huddle rooms, breakrooms and lounge areas by at least 50% or more.
10. If possible, use flex work schedules that allow a company to have half the workforce in the office at one time to provide 6-foot spacing between them and the next closest employee.

Source: Alberta’s Guidelines for Reopening - <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>



COVID-19 AND THE WORKPLACE: EMPLOYEES WEIGH IN

Here's a glimpse of how professionals are faring amid the coronavirus crisis and how they feel about returning to the office.

WORKING FROM HOME IS WORKING

77% of employees surveyed are currently working from home:



- 63% now realize their job is doable outside the office.
- 60% say their work-life balance has improved without a commute.
- 43% are more comfortable using technology.
- 20% report stronger relationships with colleagues.

PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Compared to their peers without children, parents working from home are **3 times more likely to have grown closer to colleagues**. They are also more likely to:

- Rethink business travel
- Worry about being in close proximity to others at the office
- Prefer increased telecommuting following the pandemic

RETURNING TO THE OFFICE: THE NEW NORMS

Top measures workers want their company to take as a result of COVID-19:

79%

Allowing employees to work from home more frequently; having better cleaning protocols (tie)

70%

Holding fewer in-person meetings and trainings

55%

Staggering employees' work schedules

52%

Requiring employees to wear masks

46%

Changing the office layout

The Case for Personal Space

- 72% will rethink shaking hands with business contacts.
- 61% anticipate spending less time in common areas in the office.
- 59% will reconsider attending in-person business events.
- 56% worry about being in close proximity to others at the office.



Non-medical masks (Source: <https://www.alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread.aspx#toc-4>)



Wearing a non-medical mask, such as a homemade cloth mask, has not been proven to protect the person wearing it. However, it may be helpful in protecting others around you.

- Face coverings are another way to prevent respiratory droplets from contaminating other people or surfaces.
- They should only be used in addition to other prevention steps.

If you choose to use a non-medical face mask:

- you must wash your hands immediately before putting it on, before taking it off, and immediately after taking it off
- it should fit well (non-gaping)
- do not share it with others

Face masks can become contaminated on the

outside, or when touched by your hands. When wearing a mask:

- avoid touching your face mask while using it
- continue practicing good hand hygiene
- change a cloth mask as soon as it gets damp or soiled
 - ◊ put it directly into the washing machine or a bag that can be emptied into the washing machine and then disposed of
 - ◊ cloth masks can be laundered with other items using a hot cycle, and then dried thoroughly
- masks that cannot be washed should be discarded and replaced as soon as they get damp, soiled or crumpled
 - ◊ dispose of masks properly in a lined garbage bin
 - ◊ don't leave discarded masks in shopping carts, on the ground, etc.

Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

(Source: <https://cdc.gov/coronavirus>)

How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings

Cloth face coverings should -

- it snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

CDC on Homemade Cloth Face Coverings

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.

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, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering 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.

Should cloth face coverings be washed or otherwise cleaned regularly? How regularly?

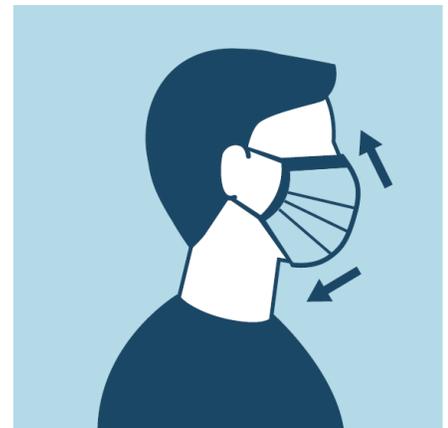
Yes. They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use.

How does one safely sterilize/clean a cloth face covering?

A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a cloth face covering.

How does one safely remove a used cloth face covering?

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

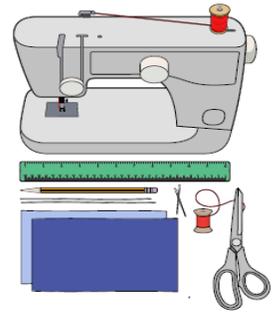


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Sewn Cloth Face Covering

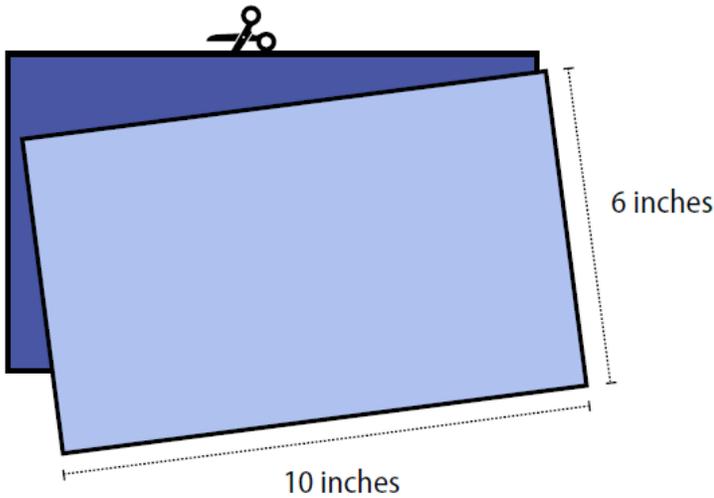
Materials

- 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

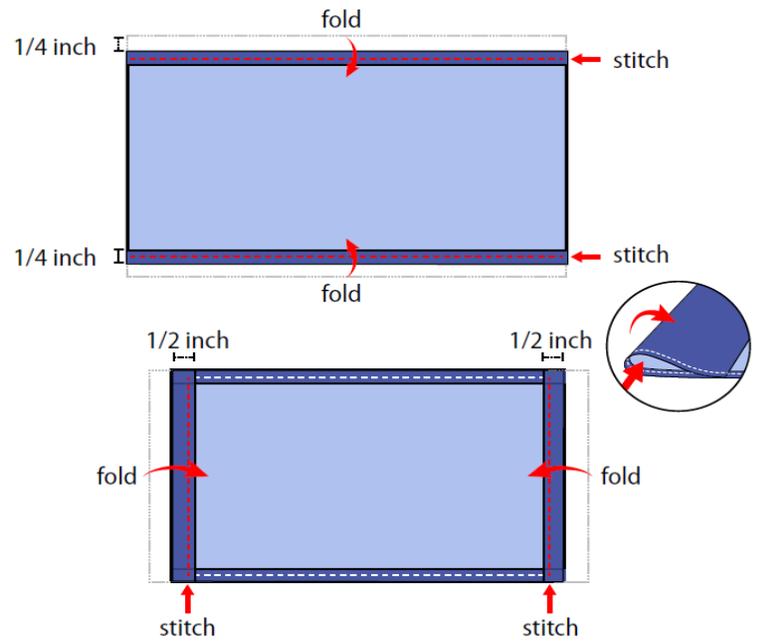


Tutorial

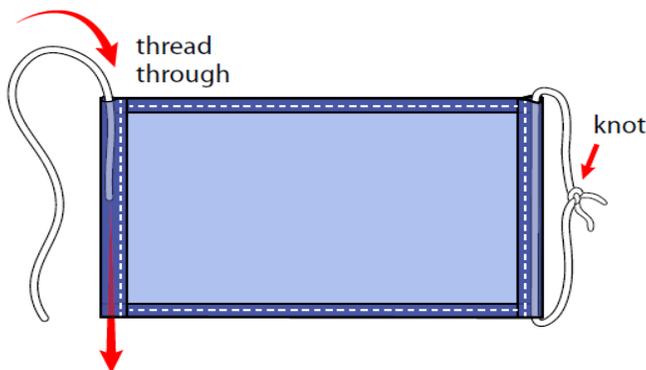
1. Cut out two 10-by-6-inch rectangles of cotton fabric. Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets. T-shirt fabric will work in a pinch. Stack the two rectangles; you will sew the cloth face covering as if it was a single piece of fabric.



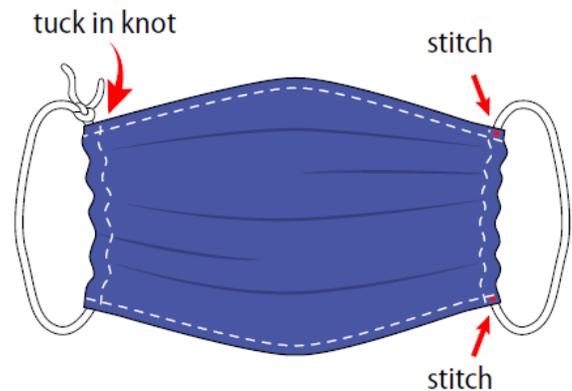
2. Fold over the long sides $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and hem. Then fold the double layer of fabric over $\frac{1}{2}$ inch along the short sides and stitch down.



3. Run a 6-inch length of $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch wide elastic through the wider hem on each side of the cloth face covering. 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 cloth face covering behind your head.



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



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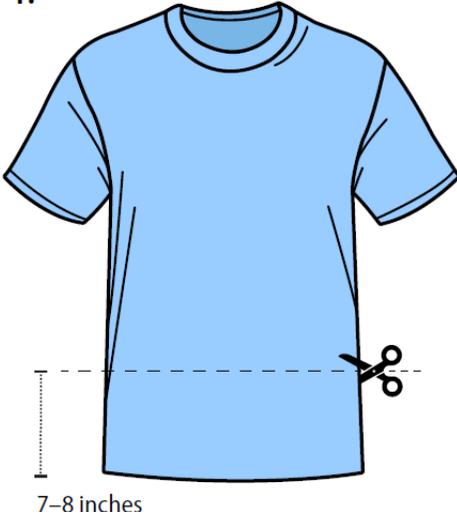
Quick Cut T-shirt Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

Materials

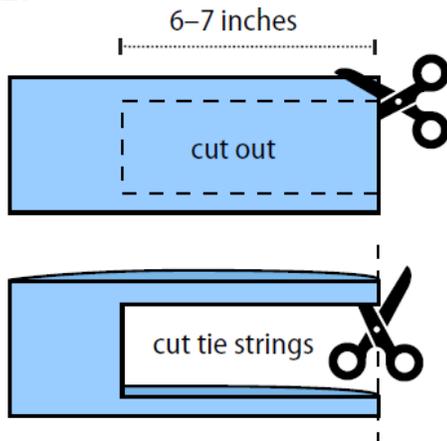
- T-shirt
- Scissors

Tutorial

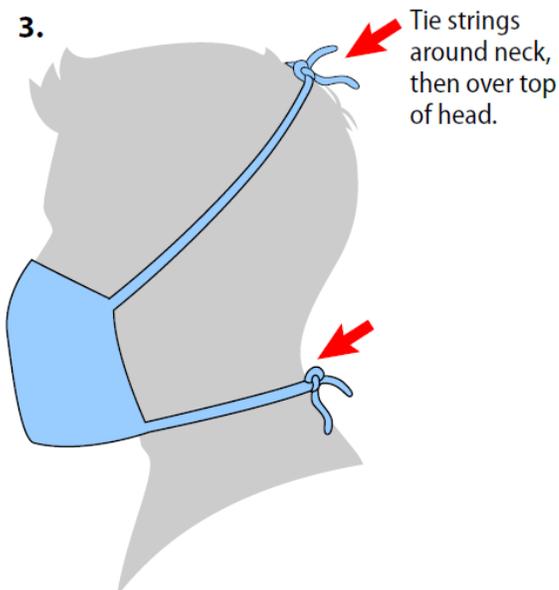
1.



2.



3.



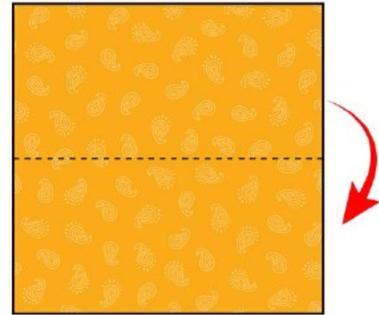
Bandana Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

Materials

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

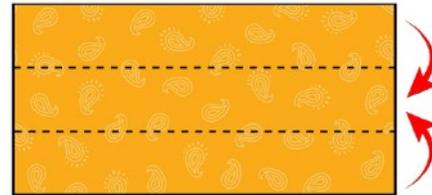
Tutorial

1.



Fold bandana in half.

2.



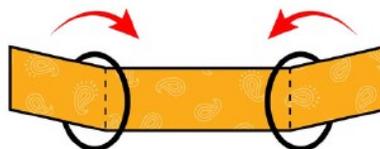
Fold top down. Fold bottom up.

3.



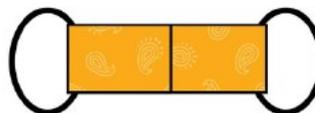
Place rubber bands or hair ties about 6 inches apart.

4.



Fold side to the middle and tuck.

5.



6.

