

# How Do You Require Customers to Wear Masks Without Endangering Employees?

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Michele Miller and Bethany Vasquez spoke with *SHRM* about how businesses that ask customers to wear face masks walk a fine line between complying with mask mandates and putting employees at risk if customers refuse and respond violently. "An employer should make clear that employees are not expected to enforce face-covering requirements and that their role should be limited to requesting and/or encouraging compliance with the business's policy," said Michele and Bethany. "Emphasis should be placed on de-escalating the situation." They said employees should report to their managers or security if a situation escalates. "Management should be responsive and take employees' concerns seriously," they said. "If employees feel like they are not being given enough support by their company in responding to disgruntled persons, it could cause employees to quit and possibly to file a claim for a hostile or unsafe work environment."

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