The following safety protocol is based on revised guidance from CDC, CDPH, and local public health orders.

The current Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) contain conditions for when employees are required to wear masks in the workplace. Recent CDC and CDPH guidance have recommended that all persons wear face coverings or masks in indoor public settings, especially in locations that have increased rates of COVID-19 transmission. Additionally, some County Public Health Officers have issued Orders that require all persons to wear masks in indoor public settings. Based on public health recommendations and orders, and in compliance with University of California systemwide COVID-19 safety standards, masks must be worn by UC ANR employees, volunteers, and program participants in UC ANR settings or activities as described below:

Mask Requirements While at Work or Engaged in UC ANR Activities

1. Persons who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 must wear a mask when working indoors or when sharing a vehicle for work.

2. At locations in Counties which are experiencing substantial or high transmission of COVID-19 (based on the CDC COVID data tracker), all persons must wear a mask indoors, regardless of vaccination status.

3. At locations in Counties which are subject to a state or local Public Health Order that requires all persons to wear a mask indoors, all persons must comply with health orders while engaged in UC ANR work or other activities.

“Fully vaccinated” means the employee has provided UC ANR with documentation that they have received both doses of a two-dose vaccine, or one dose of a single-dose vaccine and at least 14 days have elapsed since the final dose. Volunteers or program participants may “self-attest” their vaccination status while engaged in UC ANR activities.

There are also some settings where public health orders require masks for all persons, regardless of vaccination status, such as while using public transit or indoors in schools or other youth settings.

Any person who is not required to wear a mask may choose to wear a mask in all settings, indoor or outdoor, unless it would create a safety hazard.

UC ANR will provide masks for employees, volunteers, and program participants to use, or persons may use their own mask, for comfort and convenience, as long as it meets these conditions:

- is made of a tightly woven fabric or non-woven material,
- has at least two layers,
- has no visible holes or openings, and
- must cover the nose and mouth.

There are a few exceptions to the mask/face coverings requirement in the workplace, including:

1. When an employee is alone in a room or vehicle.
2. While eating and drinking at the workplace, provided employees are at least six feet apart.
3. Employees wearing respirators required by other safety orders.
4. Employees who cannot wear face coverings due to a medical or mental health condition or disability, or who are hearing-impaired or communicating with a hearing-impaired person.
5. Specific tasks which cannot feasibly be performed with a face covering. This exception is limited to only during the time period in which the tasks are being performed, and the unmasked employee must be at least six feet away from all other persons.
Determining Employee Vaccination Status

In compliance with UC's COVID-19 Vaccination Program Policy, UC ANR has implemented a secure employee survey to collect documentation of each employee’s COVID-19 vaccination status. Employee vaccination status will be kept private and will only be used by certain personnel in Human Resources and Risk & Safety Services, or supervisors, as needed to ensure compliance with the Cal/OSHA ETS and UC policy. Until an employee has responded to the survey and submitted documentation that they are fully vaccinated, they will need to continue wearing a mask while working indoors and follow any other procedures for unvaccinated persons, with the limited exceptions noted above.

UC ANR employees or supervisors must not ask the vaccination status of others. Employees should not enforce or confront their colleagues about compliance with mask protocols but should, instead, bring their concerns to their supervisors.

More information about the UC COVID-19 Vaccination Policy, COVID-19 vaccines, how to find a vaccine clinic and schedule an appointment, plus additional vaccine educational information may be found on the UC ANR COVID-19 Vaccine webpage.

N95 Respirators for Voluntary Use

UC ANR workplaces and supervisors will provide N95 respirators upon request for voluntary use by employees who have not been fully vaccinated and who are working indoors or in vehicles with other persons.

Employees who voluntarily use N95 respirators must complete the following training and documentation:

- Online UC ANR Voluntary N95 Respirator Training.
- Notify ANR Risk & Safety via the Voluntary N95 Respirator Registration survey
- Notify the local safety coordinator or superintendent of their N95 use (specify the model of N95 respirator and instances where the respirator will be used)
- Receive a copy of the Cal/OSHA-mandated voluntary use document (8CCR5144 App D (voluntary N95 use) - “Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard”)

The use of N95 respirators by individuals who are not fully vaccinated is voluntary; conventional face coverings/masks, as described in the Mask Requirements While at Work section above, are effective at helping prevent people from getting and spreading COVID-19. N95 respirators are not intended to be used by youth in UC ANR programs.

Other UC ANR Activities

In addition to employees, UC ANR volunteers, program participants, or visitors who are not fully vaccinated and are working at UC ANR locations or in public settings representing UC ANR programs must also continue to wear masks while indoors, as described above. In most cases, volunteers, program participants, or visitors will not be asked to provide documentation of their vaccination status, but will “self-attest” if they are vaccinated, or wear a mask if they are unvaccinated. This includes Master Gardener volunteers working in demonstration gardens or at Farmers Markets, and 4-H youth and adult volunteers who are attending 4-H meetings or representing 4-H at fairs, shows, or other events, etc.

Summary

CDC and CDPH have recommended that all persons wear a mask indoors in public settings. In Counties where COVID-19 transmission is substantial or high, according to CDC data, UC ANR locations must require use of masks indoors.

For more information about use of masks, see these resources: CDC Guide to Masks, CDC Types of Masks, and the CDPH Get the Most Out of Masking.

Masks must be made available at work for employees, but employees may also bring their own reusable face coverings to work and launder them at home as necessary. If supervisors need help with arranging for a supply of masks, reusable face coverings, or N95 respirators for their employees, please contact the ANR COVID-19 supply team via the Ask EH&S survey.
References:
CDPH: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx