The following safety protocol is based on current guidance from CDC, CDPH, Cal/OSHA, and local public health orders, effective 3/4/2022.

The latest guidance from California Department of Public Health (CDPH) states that effective March 1, 2022, masks are “strongly recommended” by CDPH for all persons in indoor public settings, but masks are required only in certain high-risk settings as detailed below. Additionally, the Governor issued an Executive Order suspending the Cal/OSHA ETS requirement that unvaccinated persons must wear masks in the workplace. However, the UC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Policy still requires persons who are not fully vaccinated to wear a mask while at UC facilities. This Mask Protocol interprets the various guidance and policies in the context of UC ANR employees, volunteers, and program participants in UC ANR locations or program activities as described below:

Mask Requirements While at Work or Engaged in UC ANR Activities

1. UC employees who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 must wear a mask when working indoors, when sharing a vehicle for work, or in outdoor settings when it is not feasible to maintain 6' distance from others. Wearing a mask while working indoors is one of the conditions of any approved or pending exemption to the UC COVID-19 Vaccination Program policy.
2. UC employees who are not vaccinated for influenza must wear a mask when working indoors, in compliance with the UC Flu Vaccine Mandate Executive Order.
3. Persons who have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, but are not required to quarantine or isolate, must wear a mask for a least 10 days after exposure. See Quarantine, Isolation and Return to Work guidance.
4. All persons must comply with state or local Public Health Orders and facility rules that require wearing of masks.
5. Employees or volunteers representing UC ANR must follow state public health orders that require masks for all persons, regardless of vaccination status, while in certain settings, such as while using public transit, in medical facilities, congregate living situations, or (until March 12, 2022) indoors in schools and other youth settings.

Persons may choose to wear a mask at any time or setting, unless it would create a safety hazard.

Effective and acceptable masks include: cloth masks, surgical/procedure masks, KF94/KN95 masks, and N95 respirators. 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 (CDPH recommends at least 3 layers),
- must completely cover the nose, mouth, and chin, and
- is a solid piece of material with no visible holes or openings.

For more information, see CDPH Get the Most out of Masking: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Get-the-Most-out-of-Masking.aspx

When masks are required, 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 (note: in open areas, cubicles, or shared offices, unvaccinated persons must wear a mask at all times, unless they are the only person in the building or room).
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.

Employees who are exempted from wearing a mask due to a medical condition or disability must wear an effective alternative, such as a face shield with a drape at the bottom.

CDPH’s Face Coverings Q&A has additional information.
N95 Respirators for Voluntary Use
UC ANR workplaces and supervisors will provide N95 respirators upon request for voluntary use by employees.

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 employees for COVID-19 protection is voluntary; other cloth and paper 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 provided for use by youth in UC ANR programs.

Other UC ANR Activities
In addition to employees, UC ANR volunteers, program participants, or visitors who are visiting UC ANR locations or are participating in or representing UC ANR programs in public settings 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 may be asked to “self-attest” if they are vaccinated, at some activities. 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.

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. Employees who have not reported their vaccination status and submitted documentation by responding to the vaccination disclosure survey will be considered as “not vaccinated” for purposes of this mask protocol and any measures taken in response to a COVID-19 case in the workplace.

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. Supervisors may consult with Risk & Safety Services or Human Resources as needed to ensure compliance with this mask protocol.

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

Summary
CDPH recommends that all persons wear a mask in indoor public settings, and requires masks for all persons in certain high-risk settings. UC Policy requires that employees who are not vaccinated must wear a mask while working indoors, as a condition of any exemption to vaccination requirements.

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 or for supplies for extension programs, 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