

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS



HALIBURTON, KAWARTHA,
PINE RIDGE DISTRICT
HEALTH UNIT

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Required Use of Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings within Commercial Establishments

What are the instructions being given by the Health Unit?

The Medical Officer of Health is instructing owners and operators of commercial establishments currently operating under Stage 2 of the provincial reopening to have policies in place to stop people from entering the establishment if they are not wearing a non-medical mask or face covering.

When do these instructions come into effect?

The directive goes into effect as of 12:01 am, July 13, 2020.

Why make masks mandatory now?

As more businesses and public spaces open and people increase their contacts, the risk of a rapid rise in infections and outbreaks is ever-present.

Although the number of cases of COVID-19 in the HKPR area are declining, the risk of ongoing spread remains as the reopening process continues.

Increasing scientific evidence supports wearing a mask when in enclosed public spaces as an important measure in reducing COVID-19 transmission, while the risk of rising rates of infection continues. Together with physical distancing, hand and cough hygiene, and staying home when ill, the use of a non-medical mask or face covering in a commercial establishment is an additional public health measure that may help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

What happens if I don't wear a mask?

Every Operator of an Enclosed Public Space will have a policy to ensure that no member of the public is permitted to enter or remain in the public areas of the enclosed public space unless they are wearing a mask in a manner that covers their nose, mouth and chin.

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People in an Enclosed Public Space who remove their mask for extended periods of time, will receive a verbal reminder of the requirement to wear a mask under these instructions.

Is anyone exempt from wearing a mask?

The following people are exempt from the requirements of wearing a mask while inside a commercial establishment. Please note: a person refers to any customer, patron, employee, or visitor who enters the premises.

- The Person is a child under the age of two years; or a child under the age of 5 years either chronologically or developmentally and he or she refuses to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver;
- The Person is unable to remove their mask without assistance;
- For any other medical reason, the Person cannot safely wear a non-medical mask or face covering such as, but not limited to, respiratory disease, cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information.
- For any religious reason, the Person cannot wear a non-medical mask or face covering or cannot cover the face in a manner that would properly control the source.

How is this being enforced?

Every Operator of a Commercial Establishment will have a policy to ensure that no member of the public is permitted to enter or remain in the public areas of the enclosed public space unless they are wearing a mask in a manner that securely covers their nose, mouth and chin.

Employees and operators will provide a verbal reminder to any customer entering the premises without a mask that the customer should be wearing a mask as a result of this directive.

Implementation of the policy will be enacted and enforced in 'good faith' and will be primarily used as a means to educate people on mask use in public spaces.

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Public Health Inspectors from the HKPR District Health Unit, as well as municipal bylaw and local police officers will be involved in providing additional education and enforcement to operators of commercial establishments.

Are both businesses and customers subject to fines?

Implementation of the policy will be enacted and enforced in 'good faith' and will be primarily used as a means to educate people on mask use in public spaces.

As per the EMCPA, those businesses that do not comply with the requirements may be liable for a fine of \$750 to \$1,000 for an individual, to a maximum of \$100,000 or in the case of a corporation, not more than \$10,000,000 for each day or part of each day on which the offence occurs or continues.

Can I remove my mask or face covering if physical distancing is not a concern in the establishment or enclosed public space I am visiting?

Members of the public are permitted the temporary removal of a mask where necessary for the purpose of:

- receiving services (including eating or drinking when dine-in services are allowed) or
- while actively engaging in an athletic or fitness activity including water-based activities.

Ensure you wash your hands using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after removing your mask or face covering.

Who do I call if I want to report a business not requiring customers wear a mask?

For more information on the Health Unit's instructions to commercial establishments to require the use of masks by patrons or to report a non-complying business, you can call the Health Unit toll-free at 1-866-888-4577, ext. 5020.

Can a person be refused service for not wearing a non-medical mask or face covering?

The requirement should be enforced in "good faith" and any person not wearing a mask will receive a verbal reminder from the staff of the establishment.

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