

No Mask, No Entry: Mandatory Mask Requirements Across Canada



See provincial summaries on Page 2 and 3.

ONTARIO

Following the Ontario government's announcement that it would not make wearing masks mandatory across the province, many regions and municipalities opted to enact their own bylaws or public health orders requiring masks to be worn in indoor commercial establishments. Please refer to the interactive map for locations in Ontario which currently have mandatory mask requirements, as well as a link to the applicable bylaw/order.

Although the individual bylaws/orders vary slightly—and should be consulted prior to implementing a mandatory mask policy—the general requirement is that anyone, including employees and customers, entering an indoor area of a building in which the general public has access must wear a mask or face covering, unless they fall under one of the exemptions. Some examples of exemptions include:

- Children under the age of two years old
- Individuals with underlying medical conditions which inhibits their ability to wear a mask, or in which wearing a mask would inhibit their ability to breathe in any way
- Individuals who are unable to put on or remove a mask without assistance
- Individuals who are not permitted to wear a mask for religious reasons

Masks or face coverings may also generally be removed when receiving a service—such as a personal care service to the face—while eating or drinking in a restaurant while seated at a table and while performing physical or fitness activities. Businesses and individuals who fail to comply with the bylaw or public health order enacted in a given area may be subject to a fine.

In addition, the public transit systems in some regions of Ontario are now mandating that passengers wear masks, including in [Toronto](#) and [Ottawa](#).

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The B.C. government has not made wearing masks mandatory, nor have any of its individual municipalities. However, B.C.'s provincial health officer strongly recommends masks be worn in all indoor public spaces where physical distancing cannot be maintained, particularly on public transit. As of June 15, 2020, face masks are mandatory for [BC Ferries](#)' passengers in situations where proper physical distancing of two meters cannot be maintained.

[WorkSafeBC](#) has also noted that employers in non-health care settings should consider requiring employees to wear masks as a fourth control measure, if physical distancing is not possible and workers are in close, prolonged contact with each other, and if the first three levels of the employer's [Safety Plan](#)—elimination, engineering controls, and administrative controls—are insufficient to control the risk of spreading the virus.

ALBERTA

The Alberta government has not made wearing masks mandatory across the province; however, [Calgary](#), [Edmonton](#) and [Banff](#) have opted to enact their own bylaws making masks mandatory for indoor public spaces. Similar to Ontario, the individual bylaws/orders vary slightly, but the general requirement is that anyone entering an indoor area of a building in which the general public has access must wear a mask or face covering, unless they fall under one of the exemptions. Exemptions include while eating or drinking, receiving a service to the face or while engaged in a fitness activity, as well as those set out above for Ontario. Employers, operators or proprietors must also display signage that is visible upon entering the public premises. Failure to wear a mask or post the prescribed signage may result in fines ranging from C\$50 to C\$200.

Alberta's Chief Medical Officer has also issued various [orders](#) requiring masks be worn in specific circumstances. These include, for example, staff providing direct resident care or working in resident care areas of licensed supportive living facilities, long-term care homes and licensed residential addiction treatment centres, where adequate physical distancing cannot be maintained, as well as visitors, and sometimes residents, of those facilities. For more information, please see [Order 23-2020](#), [Order 29-2020](#) and [Order 27-2020](#).

The Chief Medical Officer has also advised—but not ordered—Albertans to wear a mask as an additional precautionary measure where physical distancing is not possible. In addition, the Alberta government's [General Relaunch Guide](#) advises that employers may require employees to wear masks if a hazard cannot be removed by engineering or administrative controls. In that case, a hazard assessment should be conducted to determine if wearing a mask is necessary in the circumstances.

QUEBEC

On July 13, 2020, Premier François Legault announced that masks or face coverings will be mandatory in all indoor public spaces across Quebec, effective Saturday, July 18, 2020. The [decree](#) applies to individuals aged 12 and older, except those with specific medical conditions, such as severe cardiac or respiratory illnesses. Indoor public spaces include commercial establishments, such as retail stores, service businesses, private practices, government offices, shopping malls, places of worship, movie theatres and recreational centres, as well as restaurants and bars, except when seated at a table. Business owners who fail to ensure compliance with the order could face fines of between C\$400 and C\$6,000.

Effective July 13, 2020, wearing a face mask on [public transit](#)—including buses, the subway, ferries, taxis and car services—also became mandatory in Quebec for individuals aged 12 and older.