



Version 1.0 - July 31, 2020

Please refer to edmonton.ca/masks for up to date information

What is the Face Covering bylaw?

Effective **August 1, 2020**, wearing a mask or face covering will be mandatory in all indoor public places and public vehicles. This applies to the publicly accessible areas of businesses/retail and includes transit, transit centres and LRT platforms. The bylaw is in effect until December 31, 2020.

What is the reason for the Face Covering bylaw?

With businesses reopening, more social interactions occurring and the number of cases increasing in Edmonton, these additional measures will better mitigate a potential resurgence of COVID-19 that is being experienced around the world.

We know that navigating the COVID-19 pandemic has been tough for local businesses and a second wave may disrupt businesses further in an already challenged economy. The bylaw was informed by feedback from members of the local business community and City of Edmonton operations.

Studies show that wearing a mask can reduce the spread of infectious droplets to someone else and potential contamination of the environment by these droplets. The more people wearing masks, the more likely we are to prevent the spread of the virus and keep our economy functioning and local businesses operating.

How do I wear a mask properly?

- Please make sure to wash or sanitize your hands before putting on your mask, as well as before and after you've taken off your mask
- As you put it on, make sure your nose, mouth and chin are covered. Tighten with ties or ear loops to reduce gaps
- Do not touch the front of your mask or your face under the mask. If you need to adjust the mask or take it off, use the ties or ear loops.
- Do not wear the mask if it is wet, torn or dirty. If it becomes damp because it's been worn for a long time, change the mask.
- Do not wear the mask under your nose or chin

- Do not share the mask with another person
- If you have a cloth mask, store it in a sealed bag until you wash it with hot, soapy water

How do I dispose of a mask properly?

- Please make sure you dispose of your used disposable masks into a waste bin. If one is not available, store your used materials in a plastic bag until they can be disposed of properly.

Will the City provide a mask for me?

- Not at this time, but if that changes, the City will make an announcement.
- In June and July, the City handed out over a million masks at transit centres at LRT stations as part of the Government of Alberta's mask distribution plan.

Where are people required to wear a face covering?

An indoor public place is any enclosed space to which the public has access including:

- retail stores
- entertainment venues
- recreation centres
- transit stations
- places of worship and religious and cultural gatherings
- hotels
- public vehicles including buses and LRT
- taxis and vehicles for hire like Uber

The general rule is, if the public does not have access to it, it will be exempt under the bylaw.

What is a face covering?

A face covering means any medical or non-medical mask or other face covering that fully covers the nose, mouth, and chin which prevents the spread of respiratory droplets. A face covering can include a cloth face covering like a homemade mask, scarf or a bandana. Note that a plastic face shield is not considered adequate protection unless it wraps around the face and underneath the chin.

Who doesn't have to wear a mask or face covering?

We understand that not everyone is able to wear a mask or face covering, so we ask everyone to be kind to those unable to do so. Therefore some exemptions apply:

- Children under 2
- Those who are unable to place, use, or remove a face covering without assistance
- Those with mental or physical concerns or limitations, or any other protected ground under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, that prevent them from wearing a face covering
- Eating or drinking while seated in designated spaces or as part of a religious or spiritual ceremony
- Engaging in water activities or physical exercise

- Providing assistance or care to someone with a disability who would be hindered if the caregiver is wearing a face covering;
- Engaging in services that require removal of the face covering (e.g., having a passport photo taken or dental work, or personal care services involving the face)

The bylaw is in effect until December 31, 2020, unless it is repealed by City Council before then.

How do you know if I have an exemption? Under the Human Rights Act, I do not need to tell you what my exemption is about.

- Individuals may self-identify that they are exempt. No proof or detail are required.

I have a medical condition/allergy that prevents me from wearing a mask. What do I need to show before going into a business or using public transportation?

- If you have mental or physical concerns or limitations, or any other protected ground under the Alberta Human Rights Act, then you do not have to wear a mask or face covering
- If you have an allergy to a particular kind of mask, we encourage you to try using an alternate type of face covering (i.e. bandana/scarf)
- You don't need to show anything around being exempt however you may self-identify if you are exempt.

Will I not be allowed in a City-owned facility/refused service at a City-owned facility if I'm not wearing a mask?

- Our approach is education first. Over time, if we see repeated and flagrant infractions around wearing a mask or face covering, we may refuse service after providing a warning at City recreation facilities. In serious cases, a \$100 fine may be laid.

Can a mask/face covering be removed?

- Face coverings can be removed when eating or drinking in a designated seating area or as part of a religious or spiritual ceremony, or when engaged in water activities or physical exercise. They can also be removed *temporarily* when engaging in a service that requires this (e.g. for a passport photo, at a dentist, barber (when trimming facial hair), and other personal service treatments involving the face).

What constitutes physical exercise? I.e. dance classes, playing sports, bowling?

- Any physical activity that is more than usual movement could qualify. Simply walking the aisles of a grocery store would not qualify. In all cases, we would expect to see face coverings worn at all times and removed only for the activity - e.g. while seated with a group waiting to bowl, a face covering should be worn, but if the participant feels it would hinder them to leave it on while in the lane, it could be removed temporarily.

Are any places exempt from asking people to wear masks?

The bylaw excludes:

- schools
- health care facilities
- hospitals
- child care facilities
- employee-only spaces where physical barriers have been installed between the employee and patrons
- Condominium/apartment indoor shared spaces are not considered accessible to the public and are therefore exempt

Will the other public health measures still need to be in place?

All other public health measures, as listed below and those in place for each work area, will still need to be adhered to regardless if people are wearing a face covering or not. Face coverings are an added layer of protection to help us re-commit to public health measures and protect the safety of others.

- Maintain 2 metre physical distance
- Stay home if feeling sick
- Sanitize high-touch areas frequently
- Wash and sanitize hands regularly

Will the City be enforcing the face covering bylaw?

The focus of this bylaw is on education first, with enforcement as a last resort option to be deployed only as needed. The approach is largely around communication and education for the public to better understand that wearing face coverings is the right thing to do.

What is the difference between a face covering, a mask and a face shield?

A face covering is typically a handmade or manufactured mask, bandana or scarf made of cotton or similar fabrics.

A mask is a medical-grade or non-medical grade disposable face mask (also known as a surgical or procedure mask) that has been subject to testing and design standards to ensure they perform as intended.

A face shield typically does not provide adequate protection from the periphery (sides) and cannot be used as an alternative to a non-medical mask when physical distancing cannot be achieved, unless it wraps around the face and underneath the chin.

Do face coverings need to be worn in places of worship?

Places of worship are included in the bylaw as they are enclosed buildings that members of the public have access to. Those attending places of worship are permitted to temporarily remove their face covering for eating or drinking, such as to receive communion. With regard to the stage areas in places of worship, if this space is only accessible to those leading worship or preaching and you have implemented physical barriers or distancing practices between every person that will not be wearing a face covering and any other person, face coverings may be removed in this area. However, if these physical controls are not in place face coverings will be required.

Does the bylaw apply to shared spaces in residential condominium buildings, for example hallways, elevators and amenity spaces?

The general rule is, if the public does not have access to it, it will be exempt under the bylaw. Condominium building indoor shared spaces are not considered accessible to the public, therefore they would be exempt.

What is the protocol for AirBnb hosts who live in the home they host guests in?

As private residences are not generally accessible to the public the bylaw would not apply. Property owners may determine their own requirements within their own homes.

Does the bylaw apply to community leagues? For example, community league board meetings and events in community league amenity buildings and halls?

If the community league building is being accessed by staff only and no public will be present, masks are not required. If the league is hosting a public event, or if a league board meeting is open to the public, masks are required.

Why didn't the City just do more to educate people about masks rather than pass this bylaw?

The City has worked to educate Edmontonians on the need for face coverings to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Having the majority of people wearing masks is critical to flattening the curve of COVID-19.

Will the City provide masks?

Not at this time, but if that changes, we will make an announcement. In June and July, the City supplied more than one million masks at transit centres and LRT stations as part of the Government of Alberta's mask distribution plan. Masks can now be purchased at most grocery and retail stores, as well as farmers' markets. If using reusable face coverings, please be sure to wash them after use in accordance with [Alberta Health](#) guidance.

Why do I have to wear a face covering?

Covering your nose and mouth with a mask or face covering helps reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Wearing the face covering doesn't just help to protect you, it protects our employees and our other customers, especially those who have pre-existing health conditions.

What if I prefer not to wear a face covering?

Although you may prefer to not wear a covering in public, in order to enter publicly-accessible indoor spaces or use public transportation, a face covering is required unless you meet the exemptions listed. Exemptions can be found at edmonton.ca/masks.

Will I not be allowed on transit if I'm not wearing a mask?

No one will be denied boarding for not wearing a mask.

Why isn't my Operator wearing a mask on the bus and the shield is open?

Some Operators may have medical exemptions just as members of the public do. We have instructed ETS bus operators to drive with the shield window up, however compliance is not perfect. In some cases operators have difficulty hearing customers through the barrier and lower the slider. This will be especially true with customers wearing masks.

Businesses may download the following sign from edmonton.ca/masks to post in their premises



Where can I read the actual bylaw?

[Temporary Mandatory Face Coverings Bylaw](#)

Where can I find more information about the bylaw and other supports?

You can find more information at edmonton.ca/masks.