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Huron Perth Public Health

Instructions for Use of Masks

FAQ

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Instructions requiring the use of face coverings within establishments

The Instructions issued apply to owner/operators of indoor commercial and indoor public spaces, including employers, businesses and organizations in Huron and Perth counties permitted to be open.

‘People’ and ‘persons’ means any customer, patron, employee or visitor, who enters the premises.

The Instructions and other supporting documents can be found on the HPPH website at www.hp-ph.ca/masks.

Note: This FAQ is based on the province’s Stage 2 openings. Further FAQs will be prepared as needed.

Summary of Instructions

As an OWNER/OPERATOR of an establishment: Owners and operators of establishments, as well as public transit, must have policies in place that require people visiting their business to wear a face covering.

As a VISITOR to an establishment: You are expected to wear a face covering when you are inside an establishment or on public transit. The face covering must cover your nose, mouth and chin, without gaping.

Some people cannot wear a mask for various reasons and are exempt from wearing a face covering (see Who is Exempt?). Proof of exemption is not required and should never be asked for by an owner/operator or other visitor.

OWNER/OPERATORS and VISITORS: Please demonstrate and encourage kindness at all times and continue to be respectful and patient.

Why are these Instructions being issued now?

While cases of COVID-19 are currently low in Huron Perth, the risk for ongoing spread of COVID-19 remains as the re-opening process continues across our region.

Accumulating epidemiological evidence indicates that the widespread use of face coverings by all persons decreases the spread of respiratory droplets, and expert opinion supports the widespread use of face coverings to decrease transmission of COVID-19. As we prepare for Stage 3 reopening

and increased human interactions, we need to use all public health measures possible to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We have also been asked by many businesses for public health direction on this issue.

The use of masks or face coverings in establishments is an additional public health measure (along with physical distancing, hand and cough hygiene, and staying home when sick) which will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the community.

What is an establishment? Which ones are included in the Instructions?

Establishments are premises that are openly accessible to members of the public and are used for the purposes of offering goods or services to members of the public, including, but not limited to, a mall or other structure containing business or organization premises.

The areas of an establishment that are subject to the face covering requirements are:

- Any areas in which visitors interact with one another or with staff members, OR
- Any areas that are open or accessible to members of the public

Areas of an establishment that are not subject to the face covering requirements are:

- Areas that are outside (e.g. a restaurant patio)
- Areas that are not open or accessible to members of the public

Employees are not required to wear masks under these Instructions if:

- They are in an area of the establishment where the public does not have access and they can maintain a two metre distance
- They are protected from interactions with the public by a barrier such as plexiglass

The Instructions currently include the following establishments in Huron and Perth:

Face coverings are required in these premises:

- Arcades and other indoor amusement facilities
- Buses, bus shelters,
- Hotels and motels, with the exception of rented rooms
- Indoor areas of food premises, with the exception of patrons consuming food/drink
- Indoor areas of fitness centres, gyms and recreational and sports facilities
- Indoor concert venues, theatres and cinemas
- Laundromats
- Lobby areas of commercial buildings
- Municipal buildings
- Museums, galleries, historic sites, etc.
- Personal Service Settings
- Places of worship

- Professional services such as counselling, personal care, funeral homes, repair and rental services
- Stores and shopping malls
- Taxis, limousines, ride-share vehicles

What establishments are NOT included in the Instructions?

Exemptions (Note that some groups may have existing legislation guiding their premises)

- Day cares, schools, post-secondary institutions and other facilities used solely for educational purposes
- School transportation vehicles
- Hospitals and portions of buildings used by regulated health professionals
- Buildings and services owned or operated by the Province of Ontario or the Federal Government of Canada
- Portions of community centres, arenas or other buildings that are being used for the purpose of providing day camps for children or for the training of amateur or professional athletes
- Portions of community centres, arenas or other buildings owned or operated by the Municipality used for the purposes of providing community services or programs for which registration or prebooking for a group is required.

What are the Instructions?

These Instructions require owner/operators to make best efforts to require people entering their business to wear face coverings.

There is no requirement for a business to supply face coverings, however doing so may be an appreciated service by customers. Efforts are underway, in collaboration with our municipalities, to make cloth masks more available.

Owner/operators are also required to implement screening practices for employees and members of the public. Screening can be active (asking questions) and/or passive (signage). For employees, screening is best completed prior to reporting to work. For members of the public, signage at all entrances can be used to inform visitors of new protocols during this phase of reopening public buildings. Examples of passive screening signage can be found on the Huron Perth Public Health and the Ministry of Health's websites.

Owner/operators must ensure alcohol-based hand rub is available at all entrances and exits for the use of all Persons entering or exiting the premises if a sink is not available.

What does “best efforts” mean?

“Best efforts” means:

- Signage at the entry informing visitors of the requirement to wear a mask as per the Medical Officer of Health’s Instructions (see LINK)
- If greeting visitors at the door, give a verbal reminder that the visitor should be wearing a face covering if they can
- Give a verbal reminder to visitors who remove their face covering for extended periods of time while in the business

NOTE: There is not a need for a business to turn away the customer to achieve the best effort standard.

What is considered a mask or face covering according to these Instructions?

A face covering means a medical or non-medical mask or other face coverings such as a bandana, a scarf or cloth. The face covering must cover a person’s nose, mouth and chin without gaping.

Face shields are not acceptable forms of a face covering for the purpose of these Instructions because they are not as effective for source protection (source protection means that the person wearing the mask is less likely to transmit infection to others). However, they may be used in situations where an individual is unable to use any other type of face covering.

Who is exempt from wearing a mask or face covering in an establishment?

The following people are exempt from wearing a mask or face covering under the Instructions:

- Children under the age of two years
- Children who cannot understand the need for a mask, refuse to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver
- A person who is unable to put on or remove their face covering without assistance
- A person whose breathing would be inhibited in any way by wearing a face covering
- A person who, for any other physical or mental health medical reason, cannot safely wear a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to people with respiratory disease, cognitive difficulties, difficulties in hearing or sensory processing disorders, anxiety.
- A person for whom a religious reason prevents them from wearing a face covering that is compliant with the definition of face covering in these Instructions.

Note – ‘Person’ means any customer, patron, employee or visitor, who enters the premises.

Can I go further to make masks mandatory in my establishment?

Yes, as long as it does not violate any other laws, such as human rights codes. You may want to seek legal advice.

How is this being enforced?

Operators of establishments are expected to use their “best efforts” to implement their face covering policies. This means that signs and verbal reminders are used but there is not a requirement that a business turn away the customer. These Instructions are to be enacted and enforced in good faith and should be primarily used as a means to educate people on the importance of face covering use in enclosed spaces.

HPPH will shortly be developing a resource: Discussion Guide for Owners/Operators

It would not be feasible to enforce this policy strictly and that is not the intent. The goal is to increase mask use among those of us who are able.

Huron Perth Public Health will be taking a progressive enforcement approach to ensure compliance, with enforcement measures focusing on education. However, pursuant to the EMCPA, people who do not comply with the above-noted requirements may be fined \$750-\$1,000, and up to a maximum of \$100,000. Corporations may also be fined not more than \$10,000,000 for each day or part of each day on which the offence occurs or continues.

As part of these Public Health Instructions, the Medical Officer of Health encourages everyone to be kind, patient, and respectful to one another. Navigating this pandemic is our individual and our shared responsibility. These Instructions count on everyone’s best intentions.

Do customers at outdoor patios have to wear a face covering?

The definition of “Establishment” applies only to indoor portions of a restaurant that can be accessed by members of the public under the current Emergency Order. The owner or operator of the establishment must apply their policy requiring face coverings when clients enter the building (e.g. to use the facilities, pick up takeout food, etc.). While at your patio table, customers are not required to wear a face covering. However, the business is required to ensure physical distancing between tables.

Under what authority are these Instructions being issued?

These Instructions are being issued by Huron Perth Public Health’s Medical Officer of Health under the authority of Ontario Regulation 263/20 – Stage 2 Closures s.4(2) of the provincial Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) and related Regulations, or otherwise.

When are these Instructions in effect? How long must people comply with these Instructions?

Instructions are effective 12:01 a.m. on Friday, July 17, 2020. Establishments currently operating will be required to follow these Instructions as long as provisions are in force to follow public health advice, recommendations and Instructions. The policy will be reviewed regularly, as new evidence becomes available and in accordance with our local and regional epidemiology. Additionally, HPPH will monitor the impacts of these instructions.

Support for Business

Huron Perth Public Health is preparing resources for businesses:

- Screening Poster (See Ministry of Health's [Attention Visitors poster](#))
- Poster Asking People to Wear a Mask
- FAQ
- Discussion Guide for Owner/Operators

More Information

If you have questions about these Instructions, please call HPPH's Health Line at 1-888-221-2133 ext. 3267.

This document can be found on our website at www.hp-ph.ca/masks and will be updated as needed. Please check back regularly.