



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

July 14, 2020

Dear Employers, Business Owners and Operators;

I am writing to all persons responsible for a business or organization that is permitted to open as per Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) Ontario Regulation 263/20, to highlight your responsibilities and outline additional requirements with respect to implementing the RCDHU COVID-19 Directive for Masks/Face Coverings.

The directive comes into effect on Tuesday, July 14th. RCDHU's first step for implementation of this directive is a gradual education approach to be further assessed going forward. This directive is to be primarily used to educate people on mask use in enclosed public spaces because 2-metre physical distancing cannot always be maintained.

I am thankful for the efforts undertaken by businesses and residents across Renfrew County and District for their hard work and dedication to protect the health and safety of workers and customers. As more businesses open and people increase their contacts in Stage 3, the risk of a rapid rise in COVID19 infections and outbreaks is ever-present. Therefore, we must continue the hard work everyone across Renfrew County and District has done to get us to where we are today.

Increasing scientific evidence supports wearing a mask/face covering when in enclosed public spaces as an important measure in reducing COVID-19 transmission, while the risk of rising rates of infection continues.

As Medical Officer of Health, the following are my instructions, pursuant to O. Reg 263/20 s.4(2) (or as current), to all employers and persons responsible for businesses or organizations within Renfrew County and District regarding enclosed public spaces.

1. To the fullest extent possible, ensure effective measures are in place to maintain physical distancing amongst all employees and clients.
2. Unless the nature of work requires the use of a medical mask, to the fullest extent possible, ensure all individuals wear a mask/face covering (for example, a homemade cloth mask, bandana, or scarf).
3. Implement screening practices for employees and members of the public, including requiring those who are ill to stay home and be advised to be tested for COVID-19.
4. Promote excellent hygiene practices including hand hygiene, and cough and sneeze etiquette (for details refer to the drop-down menu titled *How can you protect yourself and your family?* On [RCDHU's website](#)).

Duty of Operator

1. Every operatorⁱ of an enclosed public spaceⁱⁱ shall have a policy in place to educate persons when entering the premises of the commercial establishment or remaining in the premises if the said person is not wearing a

mask/face coveringⁱⁱⁱ. Best efforts shall be made to educate persons about wearing a mask/face covering. The mask/face covering **should be worn inside the premises at all times**, unless it is reasonably required to temporarily remove the mask/face covering for services provided by the establishment.

2. The policy should be enacted and enforced in “good faith” and should be used to educate people on mask/face covering use in premises where physical distancing can be a challenge.
3. Ensure the availability of alcohol-based hand rub at all entrances and exits for the use of all persons entering or exiting the premises.
4. Post appropriate visible signage indicating that masks/face coverings are required inside the premises. Each public entrance to the premises should post prominent and clearly visible signage. Sample signage can be found on the [RCDHU website](#).
5. Ensure that all employees are aware of the policy and are trained on your establishment’s expectations.
6. No person shall be required to provide proof of any of the exemptions listed above, in the “Who is exempt from wearing a mask/face covering” section.
7. The policy shall:
 - Exempt the persons listed above in the “Who is exempt from wearing a mask/face covering” section from the obligation of wearing a mask/face covering.
 - Ensure that all persons working at the establishment are trained in the requirements of the policy.
 - Require that employees and agents wear a mask/face covering when working in the public areas of the premises unless the employee or agent is within or behind a physical barrier.
 - Require that employees and agents provide a verbal reminder to any customer entering the premises without a mask/face covering that the customer should be wearing a mask/ face covering.
 - Require, for customers in a premise removing their mask/face covering for extended periods of time, a verbal reminder to that customer of the requirement to wear a mask/face covering under these instructions.
 - Permit the temporary removal of a mask/face covering where necessary for the purpose of:
 - Receiving services; or
 - While actively engaging in an athletic or fitness activity including water-based activities and dining.
 - Support a non- judgemental approach for those not wearing a mask/face covering. Kindness is important as some people may not be able to wear a mask/face covering.

RCDHU encourages operators not to deny entry to someone not wearing a mask/face covering. The intent of the directive is not to have people denied entry because they are not wearing a mask/face covering. It is intended to educate people on the benefits of wearing masks/face coverings when in enclosed public spaces where physical distancing cannot always be maintained. The other reason for this is due to medical exemptions which are also stated in the directive.

To view a sample policy, please visit this link: [Sample Policy](#).

With the transition to reopen businesses and community settings in a safer way, it is critical that we continue to take efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 and work to prevent a resurgence in cases. This means being COVID-wise about our daily activities and business operations, including accessing enclosed public spaces.

Workplace guidance and resources are available on the Renfrew County and District Health Unit website at rcdhu.com/covid-19-information-for-workplaces/. More information on masks/face coverings, including how to properly use and care for them and where to access them, is available at rcdhu.com/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-2/.

Please contact the Health Unit if you have any questions about how to implement the requirements listed above by calling 613-735-8654 ext: 555 or 1-800-267-1097.

I thank you for your support and commitment to protecting our community and helping to control the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

_____Signature here

Dr. Robert Cushman

Acting Medical Officer of Health

Renfrew County and District Health Unit

Definitions

i “**Operator**” means the person who controls, governs, directs, or is responsible for the activity carried on within the Enclosed Public Space and includes the person who is actually in charge at any particular time.

ii “**Enclosed Public Space**” means indoor public spaces of businesses and organizations, accessed by the public.

These include but are not limited to:

- a. restaurants, cafés, cafeterias, banquet halls;
- b. retail establishments and shopping malls;
- c. churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, or other places of worship;
- d. libraries, museums, art galleries, recreational facilities, bingo halls, community centres and halls, cinemas, theatres, concert venues, special event venues, convention centers, or other similar entertainment, cultural, or leisure facilities;
- e. sports facilities, sports clubs, gyms, yoga studios, dance studios, and stadiums;
- f. common areas of hotels, motels, or short-term rental premises such as lobbies, elevators, meeting rooms, rest rooms, laundry rooms, gyms, and kitchens;
- g. private transportation for hire, including taxis, limousines and rideshare services
- h. common areas of premises under the control of a regulated health professional under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, S.O. 1991, c. 18, as amended, such as waiting rooms;
- i. common areas of hospitals and independent health facilities such as lobbies, food courts and retail establishments;
- j. spas, hair salons, barbers, nail salons, and other personal service settings that are subject to health and safety protocols provided by the Province of Ontario during the provincial emergency;
- k. Municipal public spaces.

The following are not considered an Enclosed Public Space:

- a. Spaces subject to provincial and/or local public health guidance:
 - i. Schools under the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, as amended;
 - ii. Child care centres and providers governed by the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11, as amended;
 - iii. Day camps.

iii “**Mask/face covering**” means: a cloth (non-medical) mask, medical mask or other face coverings, (e.g., bandana, a scarf or cloth), for filtering respiratory droplets that securely covers the nose, mouth, and chin and is in contact with the surrounding face without gapping.

Additional Resources

[Information for Business Operators – Resources for Workplaces](#)

[Sample Policy - Mandatory Use of Masks/Face Coverings](#)

[Sample Scripts for Greeters - Re: Mandatory Use of Masks/Face Coverings](#)