

Face Covering Bylaw: Business and Operators Guidance

Pandemic face covering bylaw in effect September 4, 2021

What you need to know as a business owner or operator

The Pandemic Face Covering Bylaw requires individuals to wear a face covering in indoor public spaces and public vehicles, unless the person is separated from others by a barrier or is exempt. The bylaw requires businesses to prominently display signage with face covering requirement messaging in entryways of locations that are accessible to the public. The Pandemic Face Covering Bylaw (BYLAW NUMBER 63M2021) came into effect on September 4, 2021.

Requirements

For the safety and protection of our community and our economy, the bylaw requires Calgarians to wear a face covering in indoor public spaces and in public vehicles, with some exceptions.

The City of Calgary recognizes the importance of addressing public safety while maintaining the momentum in reopening businesses and supporting our local economy. The requirements that business owners and operators need to know are:

- The bylaw requires individuals to wear a face covering while in indoor public spaces or public vehicles, unless the person is separated from others by a barrier or is exempt.
- Under the bylaw, **business operators or owners are required to display signage informing the public of the face coverings bylaw requirement in entryways of their business or vehicle.**

Signage Example: Download this entryway signage at [Calgary.ca/covid19](https://calgary.ca/covid19) for use

Note: The signage has been created in standard 8.5”x 11” formatting so it can be easily printed for entryway placement. If needed, the size can be altered, but this signage, or signage your business has created with similar face coverings bylaw messaging, must be displayed under the bylaw.



Individuals are expected to wear a face covering in any part of an enclosed indoor space the public can readily access. If the public does not have access to the space, it will be exempt under the bylaw.

Examples of businesses where people will be required to wear face coverings include (but are not limited to):

- Retail stores
- Shopping malls and plazas
- Farmers markets (in indoor spaces)
- Grocery stores, butcher shops, bakeries
- Libraries
- Churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other indoor faith-based places of worship
- Art galleries, zoos (indoor areas), museums
- Banquet halls, convention centres, arenas, stadiums, and other event spaces
- Open houses and presentation centres for real estate and sales purposes
- Common areas in hotels and motels (lobbies, elevators)
- Entertainment facilities (including live performance venues, casinos, theatres)

The bylaw excludes indoor spaces that are not accessible to the public, such as daycares. Please note that paying a fee to enter a premises is not considered enrolment or membership, and does not constitute an exception under the bylaw.

Exceptions

Exceptions to the Face Covering Bylaw include:

- Children under two years of age
- People with underlying medical conditions or disabilities inhibiting their ability to wear a face covering
- People who are unable to place, use or remove a face covering safely without assistance
- People who are seated at a table in a public premises that offers food or beverage services
- People engaging in an athletic or fitness activity
- People who are caregiving for or accompanying a person with a disability where wearing a face covering would hinder the accommodation of the person's disability (for example, the ability to lip read)
- People who have temporarily removed their face covering where doing so is necessary to provide or receive a service (for example, a visit to the dentist)

Proof is not required if someone has an exception. Businesses are not expected to deny services as not everyone is required to wear a face covering.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations you may want to utilize:

- Review the bylaw expectations with your staff so they can inform customers or visitors they must wear a face covering indoors, with some exceptions (for example, children under the age of two and people with certain health conditions, employees in designated areas or protected by a physical barrier)
- Explain to staff members that proof is not required if someone has an exemption, and that they are not expected under the bylaw to deny service. However, businesses or operators can choose to deny service under their policies.

Together, we want our city to thrive, for businesses to stay open and for Calgarians to stay healthy. This bylaw should be considered one of our most important tools to keep Calgary open.

Enforcement and reporting

The City of Calgary's primary focus is educating Calgarians on the importance of wearing face coverings in indoor public spaces and public vehicles.

To report infractions, please call 311 (from within Calgary) or 403-268-CITY (2489) (from outside Calgary).

Questions and Answers

Signage

If a business has existing signage for masks under their policy, do they need to take them down and replace them with The City signage?

- Businesses are required to display signage informing the public of the face coverings bylaw requirement when entering the premises. The sign in the bylaw includes parameters such as the prohibition, bylaw number, exceptions, website information, and a pictogram of a variety of face coverings that businesses can download and use. If businesses already have signage in place with face covering requirement messaging, they are welcome to utilize that as an alternate to The City of Calgary signage provided.

Where and how many signs need to be placed?

- Signage needs to be placed at all public entrances of the premises in a prominent location.

Staffing

Are all staff in business establishments required to wear face coverings?

- If staff are sharing an indoor space with the public, they are required to wear a face covering under the bylaw unless the person is separated from the public by an installed screen, shield or other barrier.

Are face shields considered a face covering?

- The bylaw defines face coverings that inclusively cover the mouth, nose and chin, ensuring a barrier that limits the transmission of infectious respiratory droplets. A face shield only qualifies under the bylaw if it wraps around the face and chin, fully covering the mouth, nose and chin.

Will individuals need to wear a face covering if physical distancing can be achieved?

- Yes. Physical distancing in indoor public spaces is inconsistent and unpredictable and part of why this temporary bylaw is necessary. The bylaw is written in a manner that makes it easy for citizens to understand and easy to achieve compliance.

Places of worship or events**Do face coverings need to be worn in places of worship?**

- Places of worship are included in the bylaw definition of a public premise, 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 to provide or receive service, such as to receive communion. Weddings or funerals in a place of worship are not considered public events, and therefore attendees are not required to wear face coverings. But face coverings are strongly recommended in settings where it is difficult or impossible to maintain physical distance.

In community centres or event spaces, if renters are occupying or hosting the space, what is applicable?

- Renters who are hosting private events are an exception as the space would not be open to the public. If an event is indoors and it is open to the public, face coverings are necessary under the bylaw.

If a wedding or funeral is being hosted in a church, does the bylaw apply?

- When locations such as churches or community associations are being used for weddings and/or funerals, they are not considered an open public indoor space and are exempt from the bylaw.

Meetings**Are meetings such as condo board meetings exempt from the bylaw?**

- A meeting such as a condo board meeting is exempt as members of the public do not have access. Participants are not required under the bylaw to wear face coverings.

For-hire transportation**Are vehicle for-hire companies and cab companies included in the forms of transportation that must follow the bylaw?**

- Passengers of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) and taxis require a face covering as both are defined under the bylaw as a public vehicle. In the bylaw, a 'public vehicle' includes a bus, LRT vehicle, taxi and any vehicle that is used to transport members of the public for a fee.

Drivers are required to wear a face covering unless they are separated from their passengers by an installed screen, shield or other barrier.

Outdoor spaces

Are there any instances where masks would need to be worn in an outdoor setting in Calgary? If so, where?

- The bylaw only applies to enclosed indoor public spaces, but face coverings are strongly recommended in outdoor settings where it is difficult or impossible to maintain physical distance.

Fitness facilities

Does this bylaw apply to gyms/sports centres/fitness studios in Calgary?

- Gyms, sports centres and fitness studios are considered public premises under the bylaw. People actively engaging in athletic or fitness activities in gyms, sports centres and fitness studios are exempt from the bylaw, however, people who are not engaging in such activities have to wear a face covering (for example, when entering the premises and using the changing room).

Restaurants and dining

Do people have to wear a mask when they are not eating or drinking?

- The exemption in the bylaw refers to people who are seated at a table at a public premises that offers food or beverage services. That means people are only exempt when they are seated in this type of establishment. If they are waiting in the lobby or using the restroom, a face covering is required.

Are you exempt if you are carrying a drink while walking around the mall?

- The exemption in the bylaw refers to people who are seated at a public premises that offers food or beverage services. As people who are walking with food or a beverage are not in the public premises that has offered the food or beverage, they must wear a face covering. People can consume their food or beverage at the premises where it was purchased and then wear their face covering to walk around.

Payment required

Do businesses that require payment prior to entering fall under the face coverings bylaw?

- Face coverings are required in this situation as paying a fee to enter a premises is not considered enrolment or membership and does not constitute an exemption under the bylaw. Any business that invites the public to pay an entrance fee to enter its premises is a 'public premises' (for example a museum, zoo, or movie theatre).