

Policy Title:	COVID-19 Mask and Face Covering		
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PURPOSE

As more businesses and facilities are re-opening to the public amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the BC Public Health Officer, health authorities, BC CDC and others (e.g. WorkSafeBC) continue to implore everyone in BC to remain committed to using our COVID-19 common sense. This means to continue to implement all the fundamental and important measures, layers, and precautions to keep everyone safe and to stop the spread of COVID-19. These measures include staying at home when we’re sick, reducing the number of people in our work spaces, maintaining our physical distancing wherever possible, washing our hands often, implementing engineering controls such as installing barriers and signage, increasing our cleaning protocols and wearing masks when we can’t maintain physical distancing.

Studies suggest that not everyone that has COVID-19 displays symptoms or may only experience marginal symptoms. In these cases, an infected person could inadvertently infect others. To supplement already implemented controls, an additional layer of protection includes wearing a mask or face covering to continue to minimize COVID-19 transmission.

It is commonly understood that wearing a mask or face covering can help reduce the risk of transmission. Even non-medical masks or face coverings (e.g. a homemade cloth mask, scarf, etc.) can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Wearing a mask is a quick, easy and effective way to protect each other, and it demonstrates care for others. Wearing a mask is for your own safety, the safety of those around you, and the safety of vulnerable people in your life.

This policy and related guidelines are meant to supplement the City of New Westminster COVID-19 Re-opening Safety Plan (“COVID-19 Safety Plan”). These documents provide instruction and guidance on the wearing of masks and face coverings for employees and the public involving operations, services, and programs at the City of New Westminster.

This policy and related guidelines may be updated as further information becomes available, which may include feedback and input from city departments, or requirements and directions from public health.

POLICY

As more of our city facilities are opening to the public, a supplemental layer of protection, in addition to those engineering controls (e.g., barriers), physical distancing, hygiene practices and controls that we already have in place, is the increased need to use masks. City employees are required to wear a mask in any situation or location (indoors or outdoors) where 2m of physical distancing cannot be maintained. In other situations or locations, city employees are strongly encouraged to wear masks whenever possible,

particularly in publicly-accessible spaces (e.g. hallways, foyers, entry or lobby). Masks are optional (i.e. personal choice) in all other work situations as per the table below.

This policy applies to all city employees, except Fire and Rescue Services and Police Services. Fire and Rescue Services and Police Services have to follow their own unique department mask requirements.

This policy may be updated to reflect the current pandemic situation and understanding of the risk of COVID-19, or as per the directions of the public health authorities.

GENERAL MASK OR FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS

The table below summarizes the situations and locations for general mask requirements for city employees across all city facilities.

Situation / Location	Masks are Mandatory	Masks are Strongly Encouraged	Masks as Personal Choice*
Any situation or location where 2m of physical distancing cannot be maintained (indoors or outdoors)	✓		
Inside a City vehicle with another staff member or other person	✓		
Inside a member of the public’s home or business (e.g. building inspections)	✓		
Publicly-accessible spaces in City facilities (e.g. hallway, foyer, entry or lobby)		✓	
Multi-stall, publicly-accessible washroom		✓	
Behind a Plexiglas barrier (provided physical distancing between staff members behind the barrier is maintained)			✓
Personal office or workstation (provided 2m distance from others is maintained)			✓
Employee-only areas or hallways (provided 2m distance maintained)			✓
Meetings with staff members (physical distancing maintained; room occupancy limits followed)			✓
Working outdoors and 2m of distance from others is maintained			✓

*In these situations, wearing a mask is a personal choice that will be respected.

Employees are not required to follow this mask policy when they are on their own time and away from city facilities. For example, when city employees are on their lunch break or other break periods away from a city facility (at a non-city establishment), they are not required to follow this mask policy.

There may be situations where a group uses an area of a city facility (e.g., rents meeting rooms, rinks or theatres) where they implement their own mandatory mask requirements. The city will work with its clients, associations, or patrons and honour their specific guest mask and other policies.

The general public will be strongly encouraged to wear masks when they are inside visiting city facilities. The city will make every effort to make disposable non-medical masks available to the public.

It is important to note that at no time are city employees obligated to enforce wearing of masks and face coverings by the general public at this time. Staff can encourage members of the public to wear a non-medical mask or face covering by offering them disposable masks, if they do not already have one.

Employees who wish to wear a mask or face covering while at work can also request one through their department supervisor or manager. When requesting masks and other COVID-19 related hygiene, cleaning and disinfection products, managers and supervisors (or the assigned department lead) can send their request to stores (stores@newwestcity.ca). Stores will deliver requested items to departments.

Employees are encouraged to carry a mask with them at all times while at work, in case of unplanned interactions/proximity with others where physical distancing isn't possible.

Managers and supervisors will inform their contractors, when hiring them, that they are required to wear masks when they are working in areas where there are city employees or members of the public present. Contractors are to provide their own masks. When entering a contractor's worksite, employees are encouraged to wear a mask and to follow the contractor's site safety policy and requirements.

REUSABLE MASKS

City employees will be issued 2 City-branded reusable masks and are responsible for the care and maintenance of their masks.

City employees are permitted to wear their personal, reusable masks provided that they adhere to the City's Dress Standards Policy (e.g. no inappropriate and disrespectful logos/slogans/images). Refer to City's Dress Standards Policy (EDMS document number 1257396).

IN-VEHICLE MASKS AND FACE COVERING USE

All employees who are sharing vehicles – when in transit from one job location to another, or for any other reason – are required to wear a mask.

OTHER WORK LOCATIONS (NON-CITY FACILITIES)

Employees who have occasion as part of their work to enter into non-city indoor locations would be expected to wear a non-medical mask or face covering in the following situations:

- Where the workplace has a requirement for visitors, including city employees, for mandatory wearing of a non-medical mask or face covering.
- In other indoor locations (e.g., residential), to respect a resident's wishes or request to wear a

non-medical mask or face covering in order to enter the premises.

EXCEPTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The following general situations do not require the wearing of a mask or face covering by either employees or members of the general public:

- Masks or face coverings are not recommended for children under the age of 2.
- People whose particular medical condition prevents them from wearing a mask or face covering.
- Participation during strenuous indoor activities (e.g., fitness instructors).

In situations where employees feel they do not wish to wear a mask for any other reasons, they should discuss their unique situation with their supervisor or manager. In some situations, depending on their unique issue or concern, they may be able to work with their supervisor and manager to seek a possible solution to address their concerns. Human Resources will work with department managers and supervisors to help address their employee's unique situations or concerns.

In addition to the concepts presented in this policy, city departments may have further site-specific mask and face covering requirements for employees or the public (e.g. conference delegates), in part due to additional industry standards and guidelines (e.g. emergency services such as fire or police, event industry, lifeguards, etc.). It is the responsibility of departments to determine these department specific activities and communicate expectations to department staff.

OUTDOOR WORK LOCATIONS

For situations where 2m of physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. prolonged, close contact greater than 15 minutes), employees are required to wear masks during that activity.

There may be unique department work or task specific situations where the wearing of non-medical masks or face coverings will not be required when the 2m physical distancing cannot be maintained. These situations will need to be addressed by conducting a situation-specific risk assessment and addressed by department managers.

OTHER FACE COVERING

Face shields are not considered to be a replacement for a face mask. Face shields are not to be worn as an alternative for the purposes of protection against COVID-19. Face shields may be worn in situations where a mask is not required. A face shield can be worn to supplement a mask or face covering if chosen.

Face shields would only be provided by the City for situations or roles where a shield would be recommended as determined by their supervisor or manager.

MASK AND FACE COVERING USE GUIDELINES

Aspects of mask and face covering selection, use, wearing and care are covered by a related guideline "MASK AND FACE COVERING USE GUIDELINES" (EDMS #1644667).