

# FACE COVERINGS IN ALL INDOOR ENCLOSED PUBLIC SPACES TO BE MANDATORY ACROSS LONDON AND MIDDLESEX COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 17, 2020

London, ON – With the London and Middlesex County region moving in to Stage 3 of Ontario's recovery, the Medical Officer of Health has issued instructions to all local businesses and organizations to ensure masking and other public health measures are put in place. Dr. Chris Mackie issued the Instruction under Ontario's *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* today, requiring operators of all enclosed public spaces to implement measures requiring the public to wear face coverings at all times while on their premises.

The mandatory wearing of face coverings and other public health measures including ensuring physical distancing, enhanced cleaning and providing alcohol-based hand sanitizers for customers, will come into effect at 12:01 a.m. Saturday, July 18th. The Instruction will be enforceable by public health staff, municipal by-law officers and law enforcement officials.

"We know that physical distancing is very effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19, but as the pandemic has evolved, new evidence supporting the use of face coverings in enclosed public spaces has continued to emerge," says Dr. Mackie. "Our community has done an amazing job to slow the pandemic to a crawl. We need to do all we can to prevent a spike in cases that could occur as most of our businesses and establishments move to Stage 3 of reopening."

For the purposes of the Instruction, face coverings are defined as a mask or other barrier, including a bandana or scarf, made of cloth, linen or other similar fabric that fits securely to the head and is large enough to completely and comfortably cover the mouth, nose and chin without gapping. Face coverings may also include medical masks such as surgical masks, as well as N95 or other similar masks worn by healthcare workers.

While the Instruction applies to most people, the following individuals are exempt from having to wear face coverings:

- Children under the age of 12;
- People who have a medical condition or disability which inhibits their ability to wear a face covering;
- Those unable to apply or remove a face covering without help;
- People with accommodations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or the *Accessibility for Ontarians with a Disabilities Act*;
- Staff or agents of an enclosed public space who are in an area of the premises that is designated for them and not accessible to the public, or in an area separated by a physical barrier, such as plexiglass.

There is no requirement for anyone to provide proof of exemption. For more information, visit [www.healthunit.com/novel-coronavirus](http://www.healthunit.com/novel-coronavirus).

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[www.healthunit.com](http://www.healthunit.com)