



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

(Pembroke, Ontario, July 9, 2020)

Directive for Masks/Face Coverings in Enclosed Public Spaces in Effect July 14th

Further to the Eastern Region Medical Officers of Health Announcement on July 6, Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) has released a local directive requiring masks or face coverings be worn in enclosed public spaces. 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.

Increasing evidence shows that widespread use of masks and/or face coverings acts as an additional personal practice that can help to prevent the infectious respiratory droplets of an unknowingly infected person from coming into contact with other people. Masks or face coverings provide a non-invasive, inexpensive way to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and serve as a visual reminder to others to remain vigilant and stay physically distant from others.

For the purpose of this directive, a mask is defined as a cloth (non-medical) mask, medical mask or other face coverings (e.g. a bandana, scarf or cloth), that securely covers the nose, mouth and chin and is in contact with the surrounding face without gapping. For information on accessing a mask/face covering visit the [RCDHU website](#). People who are exempt from wearing a mask or face covering include:

- Children under two years of age, or children under the age of five years either chronologically or developmentally who refuse to wear a mask or face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver;
- Individuals with medical conditions rendering them unable to safely wear a mask, including breathing difficulties or cognitive difficulties; and
- Anyone who is unable to remove the mask without help or anyone who is unconscious or incapacitated.

With the reopening of businesses and public settings in our communities, there is an increased risk of a rapid rise in COVID-19 infections and outbreaks as people expand their contacts. The RCDHU website has resources available to support the reopening of businesses and public settings, including the [COVID-19 Directive for Masks/Face Coverings](#), [Frequently Asked Questions about Masks/ Face Coverings](#), [Frequently Asked Questions about the Directive](#) and other sector specific [workplace resources](#).

For more information about COVID-19 and masks/face coverings, visit RCDHU's website at <https://www.rcdhu.com/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-2/> or call 613-735-8654.

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