

BYLAW 20-024- TEMPORARY MANDATORY FACE COVERINGS BYLAW



Why has Lethbridge County implemented a bylaw for masks/face coverings?

Due to the increasing number of cases in the County and surrounding areas, the Temporary Mandatory Face Coverings Bylaw was implemented to protect citizens and help slow the spread of COVID-19. Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health has recommended the use of masks in public places and situations where physical distancing of two metres is not possible. Other communities have enacted similar bylaws to protect their citizens and keep local health care systems from becoming overloaded with COVID-19 cases.

Where am I required to wear a mask?

The bylaw requires that masks or face coverings be worn in all indoor, enclosed, or substantially enclosed public places and public vehicles. The bylaw defines a public place as "any property or portion of a property, whether publicly or privately owned, to which members of the public have access as of right or by express or implied invitation, whether on payment of any fee or not." A public vehicle is defined in the bylaw as "a motor vehicle used or offered for the transportation of at least one passenger in return for a fee, and includes but is not limited to motor vehicles typically referred to as buses, taxis, shuttles, transportation network vehicles, and limousines."

Am I required to wear a mask outdoors?

The bylaw does not require face coverings to be worn outdoors, however the Government of Alberta recommends they be worn anytime physical distancing of two metres cannot be maintained.

Who is exempt from the bylaw?

The following persons are exempt from the bylaw:

- Children under the age of 10
- Persons who are unable to place, use, or remove a face covering without assistance
- Persons unable to wear a face covering due to a mental or physical concern or limitation, or a protected ground under the Alberta Human Rights Act, RSA 2000, c A25.5, as may be amended
- Persons consuming food or drink in designated seating areas or as part of a religious or spiritual ceremony
- Persons engaged in physical activities, water activities or the paid supervision of water activities, or attending within a sauna or steam room
- Persons providing care or assistance to a person with a disability where a face covering would hinder that caregiving or assistance
- Persons engaging in services that require the temporary removal of a face covering
- Persons participating in a dance, theatrical or musical public performance, if all participants in the performance are able to maintain at least two metres of physical distance from each other and do not enter the areas where the public is viewing the performance
- Persons providing or receiving a service that requires personal consultation if that activity occurs in a closed office or meeting room and all participants in the personal consultation are able to maintain physical separation of at least two metres from each other
- Persons separated from others by physical barriers or shields such as Plexiglas

Are schools and child care facilities included in the bylaw?

No. School divisions have their own regulations on face coverings so please reach out to your child's school to determine what rules apply. The bylaw does not apply to child care facilities, however individual facilities may choose to require visitors wear a mask.

Are churches and religious ceremonies included in the bylaw?

The Government of Alberta requires that face coverings be worn for religious or spiritual ceremonies as of November 24, 2020. If the Province removes these restrictions, the Lethbridge County bylaw would require face coverings at religious services except:

- Persons consuming food or drink as part of a religious or spiritual ceremony
- Platform and stage areas in places of worship during worship services, provided that physical barriers or physical distancing practices are implemented between any person not required to wear a face covering by operation of this exception and any other person

I am a business owner, how do I enforce the bylaw in my business?

As an owner, you have the right to refuse service to anyone who does not comply with measures you set forth in your business, including mandatory face coverings (provided that person is not exempt or protected under the Alberta Human Rights Act).

You can put a poster on your door reminding customers of the face covering bylaw (posters are available to download at <https://lethcounty.ca/p/covid-19-information>), as well as advertise alternative means of shopping, such as delivery or curbside pick-up.

What qualifies as a face covering under the bylaw?

Under the bylaw, a face covering means a medical or non-medical mask or other face covering that fully covers the nose, mouth, and chin. It is important that it covers all these parts of the face in order to be effective in preventing the transfer of respiratory droplets. Ensure that your mask fits well and doesn't have any gaps or is dirty or damaged.

To learn more about how to properly wear a mask, visit <https://www.alberta.ca/masks.aspx>

Are there fines for not wearing a mask?

Fines for not complying with the bylaw are \$100. Lethbridge County is focusing on education and relying on the public's cooperation in wearing face coverings to protect the community.

What do I do if I see someone not wearing a mask in a public place?

Lethbridge County is encouraging everyone to be kind and courteous to one another during these difficult times. If you see someone who isn't wearing a mask, you can kindly remind them of the bylaw that is in place.

If you see obvious disregard for safety, you can contact Lethbridge County's Community Peace Officer at 403-634-0755 or the RCMP at 403-345-5552.

How long is the bylaw in effect for?

The bylaw is in effect immediately and until further notice.