

Instructions for Face Coverings: Discussion Guide for Operators

Purpose

This guide will help you communicate the Instructions and policy required by Huron Perth Public Health regarding face coverings.

Above all

Please encourage kindness at all times. Please continue to demonstrate respect and patience.

Advising employees to wear a face covering

What to know:

- You must ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that all individuals wear a mask (for example, a homemade cloth mask or face covering) where a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (or when employees work in the public space of the business without a suitable barrier), unless the nature of the work requires the use of a medical mask.
- An employee may have a reason to be exempted from wearing a mask (see list of exemptions in Instructions). We do not recommend sending an employee home because they cannot wear a mask.

Asking customers to wear a face covering

What to know:

- You are not required to turn a customer away
- Do not ask for people to provide proof of medical exemption or any other exemption
- Posters saying masks are required are available from HPPH for your windows/walls.
- Non-medical masks are available at a variety of price points. United Way Perth-Huron has compiled a list of [where to find masks](#) in Perth and Huron Counties and encourages those who have difficulty with the cost to apply to their [urgent needs fund](#). Individuals can also call 2-1-1 or visit 211ontario.ca to access this information.

What you might say:

- We are now following the direction of the Medical Officer of Health and requiring everyone to wear a face covering if you can.
- If you are able, please bring your own mask next time.

- *If applicable:* We also have these other options (for example, we provide free masks for customers, we have masks available to purchase, we can provide information on where to get masks).

Talking to customers who are angry about Instructions

What to know:

- These Instructions have been issued by the Medical Officer of Health for businesses and organizations which are allowed to be open.
- Why now? Dr. Klassen explains the decision: “Stage 3 means increased openings and larger groups allowed, so there will be more interactions between more people. This means the risk of virus spread is increased. Normalizing the use of masks helps reduce this risk and helps keep businesses and services up and running. We ask everyone to be kind and understanding when others can’t wear masks, and to physically distance from them.”
- Should a customer become intimidating or verbally abusive to other staff or customers, abide by your store or organization’s policies regarding refusal of service.

What you may hear:

- Why are you making me wear a mask? [Customer disputing the science, violation of rights]
- You can’t make me wear a mask. [Violation of rights, the Instructions say I don’t HAVE to wear a mask]

What you might say:

- No, we can’t make you wear a mask, but we strongly encourage you to consider wearing one both for your protection and for mine if you are able. My mask protects you and your mask protects me.
- We are following the Instructions issued by the Medical Officer of Health to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Physically distancing also protects people so we would ask that you maintain 2 m between you and other customers and staff.

Talking to customers who are angry about others not wearing masks

What to know:

- Under these Instructions, you are not required to turn a customer away or ask a customer to leave.
- Not everybody can wear masks and are exempt under these Instructions. For instance, children under the age of two, individuals with a medical condition, including mental health or sensory disorder, that make it difficult to wear a mask, people who are hearing impaired, or individuals unable to put on or remove a mask without assistance. As well, employees in

businesses that are not open to the public, and employees who do not come into public spaces within a business or are behind a physical barrier are also exempt.

- People without face coverings are NOT required to provide proof of medical exemption or any other exemption and should NOT be asked to.
- Dr. Klassen explains the decision: “Stage 3 means increased openings and larger groups allowed, so there will be more interactions between more people. This means the risk of virus spread is increased. Normalizing the use of masks helps reduce this risk and helps keep businesses and services up and running. We ask everyone to be kind and understanding when others can’t wear masks, and to physically distance from them.”

What you may hear:

- What are you going to do about that customer, they’re not wearing a mask?
- I THOUGHT that we were all supposed to wear masks now. Clearly your store isn’t following the Instructions.

What you might say:

- Our store/business has a policy in place to require people to wear face coverings. Some people cannot wear masks and are exempt. We do not ask people for proof of exemption.
- Our store/business policy requires employees wear a mask when working in the public areas of our business, unless they are within or behind a physical barrier or in an area of the premises that is not designated for public access.
- Physical distancing and regular cleaning also help protect you. We are cleaning regularly and you can keep your distance from other customers and staff who are not wearing masks to keep yourself safe.

Questions about enforcement

What to know:

- Operators of establishments are expected to use their “best efforts” to implement their face covering policies. This means that signs and verbal reminders are used but there is not a requirement that a business turn away the customer.
- These Instructions are to be enacted and enforced in good faith and should be primarily used as a means to educate people on the importance of face covering use in enclosed spaces.
- Although fines are possible under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act for serious non-compliance, it would not be feasible to enforce this policy strictly and that is not the intent. The goal is to increase mask use among those of us who are able.

- Calling in complaints is not necessary. We've provided information to owners and operators regarding this policy, including exemptions. We ask everyone to be kind and understanding when others can't wear masks, and to physically distance from them. Please note the Instructions are not a Section 22 making it mandatory, they are a good faith requirement.
- The use of masks or face coverings in establishments is an additional public health measure (along with physical distancing, hand and cough hygiene, and staying home when sick) which will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the community.

What you may hear:

- I'd like to register a complaint that you have customers and employees not wearing masks.
- I'm going to complain to the Health Unit that you are not following Instructions because I saw someone in the other aisle not wearing a mask.

What you might say:

- Some people are exempt from wearing masks. Our policy is that everyone who can wear a mask should be, but some people can't, for a number of reasons.
- In accordance with public health instructions, we are required to have a policy for our business and post signs at all entrances reminding everyone to wear a mask. We have informed our staff of this new policy and trained them on who is exempt. All staff, customers or visitors must wear a mask indoors, with some exceptions (e.g. children under the age of two and people with certain health conditions, and employees in designated areas or protected by a physical barrier). Proof is not required if someone is exempt.
- Our staff let all customers entering our premises without a mask know that they should be wearing a mask if they can. We recognize that some individuals, due to circumstances, are exempt from wearing masks. We believe in enforcing our face coverings policy in "good faith" and hope that all of our customers who are able will wear masks in public spaces.
- If you have concerns about this policy, you can refer to the Huron Perth Public Health website where these Instructions are outlined and then call the Health Unit.
- Thank you for bringing it to my attention but I am not required to refuse anyone service. Please ensure you practice physical distancing when you are around them or avoid them all together.
- We ask everyone to wear a mask and trust that those who can, are wearing a mask. We do not ask for proof of exemption.
- My employees are required to physical distance while they are working and the space is allowing this effectively.
- I feel confident that I am doing as much as I can as directed by the HPPH Medical Officer of Health.