



COVID-19 Directive

Use of Masks/Face Coverings on Campus

1.0 Directive – Dec 3, 2021

1.1 **PHO Mask mandate:** on Dec 3, 2021 Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry extended the [Face Coverings Order](#) (mask mandate) in all indoor public spaces in BC, including on post-secondary campuses. **OC students, employees, and members of the public age 5 and older are required to wear a non-medical mask in all public indoor spaces, regardless of vaccination status, including classrooms and other indoor instructional settings (e.g., labs and shops), except in the following instances (and under the detailed exceptions below in Section 5):**

- Instructional staff, students, and other presenters do not need to wear a mask when presenting in a classroom, lab, or shop if they are behind a barrier or can maintain two metres of physical distance from others in the room;
- Employees, students, and members of the public can remove their mask to consume food or drink while seated in areas designated for the consumption of food and drink (**note: you must put your mask back on as soon as you are finished eating or drinking**);
- Employees, students, and members of the public can remove their mask if they are in a room by themselves or are separated from others by a barrier.

1.2 Regarding external settings and any time that distancing cannot be maintained:

- Following PHO and Interior Health guidance, the College requires mask use when physical distancing of two metres from others cannot be maintained when learning or working, including outdoors. See sections 4 and 5 below for details and exceptions.

2.0 Introduction and Background

Introduction

- a. This Directive is responsive to the provincial context of COVID-19 and may be updated periodically. It may also be modified in response to local conditions.
- b. The College will continue to follow the guidance of the Provincial Health Officer, Interior Health, WorkSafeBC, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training and the First Nations Health Authority.
 - The College is committed to the health and safety of its employees, students, contractors and visitors.

3.0 Definitions

- For purposes of this Directive, “mask” means a non-medical face mask that covers the nose and mouth, ties around the ears or back of the head, fits snugly against the sides of the face, is secured under the chin and is designed to protect persons other than the wearer. “Masks” do not include N95 and other filtered masks required by health-care workers.

4.0 Scope

- This Directive applies to College employees, students, contract workers, vendors and visitors.
- Wearing a non-medical mask is mandatory while in indoor public areas at all campuses and centres of Okanagan College. Indoor public areas include but are not limited to building entryways, lobbies, atriums, washrooms, hallways, stairwells, classrooms, labs, shops, libraries, shared office spaces (until seated at your desk/work station), a workplace vehicle when being used to transport more than one worker for work-related purposes, a vehicle provided by a post-secondary institution when being used to transport students, and other high-traffic areas. Non-medical masks are also required wherever physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Per guidance from the PHO, Okanagan College has transitioned from a COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan to a Communicable Disease Plan as part of its ongoing response to support the health and safety of students, employees and visitors. Please review the [Communicable Disease Plan](#) for more information about the other health and safety measures in place to keep our community healthy.

5.0 Exemptions

The mandate to wear a mask does not in any way replace or eliminate the obligation of employees, students or visitors to use respirators, surgical masks, face shields or any other job-specific personal protection equipment (PPE) required by the College’s safe-work procedures or Occupational Health and Safety policies, regulations and directives. Please see Section 7 below for Accommodations.

- 5.1 Exemptions from use of face coverings – students.** Masks are not required in the following instances: (a) If the student is unable to wear a face covering because of (i) a psychological, behavioural or health condition, or (ii) a physical, cognitive or mental impairment; (b) if the student is unable to put on or remove a face covering without the assistance of another person; (c) if the face covering is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the student; (d) while the student is consuming food or drink and while seated; (e) while participating in physical activity organized by the post-secondary institution or at a fitness facility or sport facility; (f) while communicating with a person for whom visual cues, facial expressions, lip-reading or lip movements are essential; (g) if the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, for example

while actively playing a wind instrument; (h) if the student is behind a barrier separating the student from other persons, for example a divider or cubicle; (i) if the student is in a room by themselves; (j) if the student is in a post-secondary space and no other students, post-secondary staff persons or members of the public are present. (k) the student is delivering a presentation or lecture if (i) there is a distance of two metres separating the student delivering the presentation or lecture and students and other persons attending the presentation or lecture, or (ii) there is a physical barrier between the student delivering the lecture and the students and the persons attending the presentation or lecture.

5.2 Exemptions from use of face coverings – post-secondary staff persons (instructional and support). Masks are not required in the following instances: If the post-secondary staff person is unable to wear a face covering because of (i) a psychological, behavioural or health condition, or (ii) a physical, cognitive or mental impairment; (b) if the post-secondary staff person is unable to put on or remove a face covering without the assistance of another person; (c) if the face covering is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the post-secondary staff person; (d) while the post-secondary staff person is consuming food or drink at a location designated for those purposes by the post-secondary institution and while seated; (e) while participating in physical activity organized by the post-secondary institution or at a fitness facility or sport facility operated by the post-secondary institution; (f) while communicating with a person for whom visual cues, facial expressions, lip-reading or lip movements are essential; (g) if the post-secondary staff person is in a room by themselves; (h) if the post-secondary staff person is in an office or other indoor area of a building or structure operated by the post-secondary institution and if no students or members of the public are present; (i) if the post-secondary staff person is delivering a presentation or lecture or teaching if i. there is a distance of two metres separating the post-secondary staff person and students, or ii. there is a physical barrier between the post-secondary staff person and students.

5.3 Exemptions from use of face coverings – visitors. Masks are not required in the following instances: if a visitor is less than 5 years of age; (b) if a visitor is unable to wear a face covering because of (i) a psychological, behavioural or health condition, or (ii) a physical, cognitive or mental impairment; (c) if a visitor is unable to put on or remove a face covering without the assistance of another person; (d) if the face covering is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the visitor wearing it; (e) while the visitor is consuming food or drink at a location designated for those purposes by the operator of the indoor public space, or post-secondary space and while seated; 7 (f) while the visitor is participating in exercise activity or sport at a fitness facility or sport facility; (g) while communicating with a person for whom visual cues, facial expressions, lip-reading or lip movements are essential. (h) the visitor is delivering a presentation or lecture, if (i) there is a distance of two metres separating the visitor and a person attending the presentation or lecture, or (ii) there is a physical barrier between the visitor and the persons attending the presentation or lecture.

6.0 Application

6.1.1 This Directive applies until rescinded or amended by the College.

7.0 Accommodations

- 7.1 In addition to the exemptions in section 6 the College will make reasonable accommodations to the point of undue hardship on a case-by-case basis as required by British Columbia's Human Rights laws.
- 7.2 **Employees seeking accommodation for a mask exemption must contact Human Resources and follow the [Accommodation of Employees Policy](#).**
- 7.3 **Students seeking accommodation for a mask exemption must contact the Accessibility Services Department and follow the [Accessibility Academic Accommodations for Students Policy](#).**
- 7.4 **For visitors or customers who claim a mask exemption and are interacting on a short-term basis with the institution (i.e. as a bookstore or food service customer), employees are directed to:**
- a. Ask the individual if they are not wearing a mask for reasons outlined in section 5. If the answer is yes, then refrain from asking for evidence: as per direction from the BCCDC, PHO and the BC Human Rights Commissioner, accept the response. If the answer is no, ascertain whether there are alternative ways to provide the service that would satisfy the individual or if alternate arrangements could be made.
 - b. In the event that the individual refuses to wear a mask for reasons other than outlined in Section 5 and refuses alternate means of service (such as phone or online appointment), inform them that the College is following Provincial Health Officer orders and that they will not be permitted in indoor public spaces on campus.
 - c. In the event an individual becomes belligerent, threatening or violent, contact Security at 6699 or, if the situation is an emergency, call 911. See the College's Reporting Unsafe Behaviour Directive.

Attachment A: Face Mask Use Do's & Don'ts

Do's

- ☑ DO make sure your mask completely covers your nose and mouth
- ☑ DO put on your mask properly using the tie loops or elastic bands that secure behind your head or ears
- ☑ DO wear your mask snugly around your face and adjust it as necessary throughout the day
- ☑ DO, when taking off your mask and putting it down, place it with the outside down on a tissue. If a tissue isn't available, clean the surface on which you placed it afterwards
- ☑ DO wash your hands and face after removing the mask and before touching your face
- ☑ DO keep your mask clean and launder it once a day in warm water
- ☑ DO store your mask in a clean and dry space or properly dispose of it
- ☑ DO request a new mask if the one you're using becomes unsanitary or damaged

Don'ts

- ☑ DON'T wear your mask under your nose or mouth
- ☑ DON'T let a strap dangle down or cross the straps
- ☑ DON'T touch or adjust your face mask without cleaning your hands before and after
- ☑ DON'T wear your mask on your head (other than covering your nose and mouth) or around your neck or arm
- ☑ DON'T let your mask fog your safety glasses or otherwise obstruct your vision
- ☑ DON'T lay your mask on a surface that could be contaminated or where your mask might contaminate the surface
- ☑ DON'T wear your mask near machinery, equipment or parts in which it may become entangled
- ☑ DON'T use a mask if it is damaged in any way