

Frequently Asked Questions

Manitoba's Pandemic Response System and Non-Medical Mask Use

Under Manitoba's Pandemic Response System Level **Orange (Restricted)**, public health officials require the use of non-medical masks in all **indoor public places** within any area that is included in the geographic area identified by the Pandemic Response System Level.

1. Who do these requirements apply to?

These guidelines apply to **all entering** health care settings in the included geographic region, including **staff, designated support persons, general visitors, tradespeople and vendors, and outpatients.**

All employees, in any role, must wear a non-medical face mask at work while inside all buildings and facilities.

This includes the following scenarios:

- *Entering and exiting a building, meeting space, unit or office space*
- *Passing through or remaining in common areas, such as lobbies, hallways lunchrooms, printer areas, elevators and tunnels*
- *Attending or visiting within an office or work unit space where physical distancing is not possible*
- *Travelling to or using washroom facilities*

Exceptions:

When alone in your personal workspace, you are not required to wear a face mask if you are able to maintain physical distancing from those around you.

While attending a meeting or visiting a personal workspace in person, employees do not need to wear a mask for the duration of the meeting/visit as long as the appropriate physical distancing measures are in place and maintained. Employees should wear a mask while entering and when exiting the meeting area.

When using a building's gym/wellness facilities, employees do not need to wear a mask if they are able to maintain physical distancing from those around them. Employees should wear a mask while entering and when exiting the facility.

2. Who do these guidelines NOT apply to?

Children under the age of five (5) are exempt as are those determined on a case-by-case basis to be exempt for medical reasons (e.g., severe C.O.P.D, breathing or cognitive difficulties, or a disability, that prevents them from safely wearing a mask).

Individuals who are unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person are similarly exempted. These individuals must maintain physical distancing at all times.

Individuals may also temporarily remove their mask while in a hospital or health care facility for the following purposes:

- To receive a service that requires the removal of their mask;
- To consume food or drink in staff rooms, lunch rooms or other designated areas;
- To deal with an emergency or medical purpose; or
- To establish their identity.

3. Do these requirements apply to staff?

Staff are required to wear their own non-medical masks when passing through health care facilities, (e.g. in hallways and other areas where patients may be present) even if physical distancing is able to be maintained.

4. Does this replace my use of PPE?

No. This public health requirement **does not** replace the need for appropriate use of facility-provided PPE.

It also **does not** replace the need for ongoing vigilance and adherence to public health advice and infection prevention and control protocols (e.g. proper hand hygiene, physical distancing and the need to stay home when ill).

4. When will this requirement take effect? At which health care facilities?

This requirement will take effect September 28, 2020 in all public places, including all health care settings. The requirement is a result of the Winnipeg Capital Region's ORANGE Pandemic Response Level.

5. Do I have to wear a mask when alone in my office/workstation?

No. When in your office or at your workstation in a non-clinical area, you are not required to wear a non-medical mask provided you are able to maintain physical distancing. If you leave your office/workstation to travel through a public space (corridor, cafeteria, etc.) you must wear your non-medical mask.

For information on how to safely use a non-medical mask or face covering, please refer to:

<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/non-medical-mask-poster.pdf>