

Victoria University Guideline on Face Masks

August 20, 2020 (Updated August 27, 2021)

The initial version of this Guideline was based on the requirements as of August 2020. The President of Victoria University approved *Victoria University's Policy on Non-Medical Masks or Face Coverings* (amended August 27, 2021 as the *Victoria University Policy on Face Masks*). This Guideline is being issued under the Policy to offer further guidance and information regarding the mask requirement. The Policy and this Guideline support the University's compliance with legal requirements.

This Guideline remains in effect as long as the Policy is in effect and is subject to change and to extension at the discretion of the University administration as public health guidance, legal requirements, and understanding about COVID-19 evolve.

Masks Requirement

Wearing face masks is required in all indoor University spaces (including University-owned and leased spaces), whether restricted-access or open to the public. "Indoor University spaces" are defined in the Policy. In leased spaces, occupants may also be subject to the policies and guidelines of the building owner or manager. Wearing a mask is also strongly recommended outside when people cannot physically distance more than two metres. Unless otherwise noted, these requirements apply regardless of an individual's COVID-19 vaccination status.

"Face mask" is defined in the Policy. Non-medical masks with a clear panel are available from the [U of T MedStore](#). Cloth masks should adhere to the guidelines for such masks as recommended by public health authorities (e.g., high thread count, three-layer cotton cloth, or two layers with a filter).

Exceptions

Face masks are not required, subject to health and safety requirements, public health advice, and legal requirements that pertain to specific factual circumstances, in the following circumstances:

- When an individual is required to wear personal protective equipment in lieu of a non-medical face mask, as determined by public health directives
- When wearing a face mask would create a risk to the individual related to their work, as determined by the University's workplace safety guidelines, or would create a health and safety risk to an individual who is not a worker as determined by worksite or activity-specific safety procedures
- In University residence spaces that are not common areas, such as dorm rooms
- While participating in athletic or fitness activities, playing a musical instrument in a rehearsal or performance, or performing in or rehearsing for an artistic performance (e.g., film, television, or theatrical production or concert)
- While receiving a service that necessitates temporary removal of the mask
- When eating or drinking, physical distancing of two metres must be maintained or each person must be separated by an impermeable barrier
- In learning and teaching environments, if it is determined that the delivery of a specific learning activity requires the temporary removal of face masks on the basis that wearing them would

fundamentally undermine the effectiveness of that activity, and where the activity can be carried out safely

- If instructors recommend that students remove masks temporarily for specific components of class, or if instructors choose to remove their own masks for pedagogical reasons (e.g., while lecturing), they must ensure that the learning activities are carried out in accordance with public health guidance, with appropriate safety measures in place such as physical distancing, in alignment with public health directives and approved through applicable University procedures
- For University employees:
 - In research environments, if the approved departmental re-entry plans allow individuals to maintain a consistent two-metre physical distance and where there is no requirement for personal protective equipment
 - In certain administrative, office, and industrial environments (e.g., server rooms, control rooms, mechanical rooms) that are accessible only to employees, when the physical layout allows individuals to be alone or maintain a consistent two-metre physical distance. Examples include in private offices or when it has been determined through an approved re-entry plan using the University's COVID-19 General Assessment Tool (GAT) that masks are not required
- While attending a school within the meaning of the *Education Act* or a childcare program, provided the school or childcare program is operating in compliance with applicable guidance issued by public health and government authorities

Accommodation

Individuals may be exempt from this Guideline in the following situations:

- If they require accommodation (e.g., for reasons of disability, religion, or other) under Ontario's *Human Rights Code and/or the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- Children under the age of two
- If they have a medical condition including a physical condition, mental health condition, or other health concern that makes it difficult to wear a face mask, including a medical condition that makes it difficult to breathe, or to put on and remove a face mask without assistance, or someone who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Where the ability to see the mouth is required for communication, if they are persons with hearing loss and/or deafness or if they are the person communicating with a person with hearing loss and/or deafness, provided measures are in place to protect health and safety

Members of the community should not ask colleagues, students, or others at the University for supporting documentation or other proof regarding exemptions or accommodations under the *Policy* or this Guideline. In specific circumstances where individual health and safety is at risk, an individual who is unable to wear a face mask due to one of the reasons above may be asked by a manager or academic administrator to provide supporting documentation to the University through the appropriate office on a confidential basis. For example, employees, including faculty members, may be asked to provide documentation to Victoria University's Human Resources Office, or students may be asked to register with the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services.

Education and Enforcement

The University will focus on educating members of the community about the *Policy* and this Guideline, including the benefits of face masks with regard to community transmission of COVID-19, as well as the importance of accommodation and personal privacy regarding medical or other conditions.

Enforcement measures will focus primarily on an educational approach and will depend on the individual's relationship with the University, the nature of an incident, the place in which it occurred, and the impact on others in that place.

Regulatory History

The Ontario regulations will take precedence over either the *Policy* or the Guideline when there is conflict between them.

Below is a list of the applicable Ontario regulations governing mask requirements in the Toronto and Peel Public Health Units:

- O. Reg. 541/21, amending O. Reg. 364/20, effective July 29, 2021
- O. Reg. 313/21, amending O. Reg. 82/20, effective April 23, 2021
- O. Reg. 82/20, as amended (applicable to Toronto and Peel from November 23, 2020 to present)
- O. Reg. 263/20, as amended (applicable to Toronto and Peel from October 10, 2020 to November 22, 2020)
- O. Reg. 364/20, as amended by O. Reg. 546/20, effective Oct. 3, 2020 (applicable to Toronto and Peel from Oct 3 to Oct 9, 2020)

Resource

- Ch 6 [General Workplace Guideline](#)

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