

# British Columbians could be fined \$230 for not wearing a mask in indoor, public spaces



By **Richard Zussman** Global News

Posted November 24, 2020 8:15 pm

Updated November 25, 2020 5:50 pm



A shopper at the Kootenay B.C. Co-op store refused to keep his mask on while shopping on Tuesday and was eventually confronted by the store manager and security guard and asked to leave.

Anyone who is caught without a mask in an indoor public place or who refuses to comply with the mandatory mask policy in B.C. will be handed a \$230 fine.

The province made the announcement Tuesday afternoon, as health officials reported a staggering 941 new cases of **COVID-19** and 10 new deaths.

As of Nov. 19, masks are required to be worn in almost all indoor public places.

A fine can also be issued if someone refuses to leave a public place or responds with abusive or belligerent behaviour when asked to wear a mask where required.



1:37

Man who refuses to wear mask inside B.C. grocery store is asked to leave

“These measures give police and other enforcement officials the tools to intervene with and penalize problematic individuals and groups,” Public Safety Minister Mike Farnworth said.

“Businesses should provide signage on the mandatory mask policy and inform customers about the requirement. Of course, despite any range of efforts, some people will break the rules knowing full well what they’re doing.”

The law requires people to wear masks in the following places:

- Malls, shopping centres, coffee shops, and retail and grocery stores
- Liquor and drug stores
- Airports, city halls, libraries, and community and recreation centres
- Restaurants, pubs and bars
- Places of public worship
- On public transit and in a taxi or ride-sharing vehicle
- Common areas of office buildings, courthouses, hospitals and hotels
- Common areas of sport and fitness centres when not engaged in physical activity

- Common areas of post-secondary institutions and non-profit organizations



8:53

Why no mask mandate in B.C. schools? – Nov 21, 2020

Provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry was reluctant to put in a mandatory mask policy but decided to support the policy after concerns were raised by businesses about enforcing a mask requirement.

Working with public health officials, Emergency Management BC anticipates issuing further orders to enforce requirements for masks in common areas of apartment buildings, condos and workplaces.

[ [Sign up for our Health IQ newsletter for the latest coronavirus updates](#) ]

The law defines a mask or face covering as a medical or non-medical mask that covers the nose and mouth. Face shields are not a substitute for a mask, as there is an opening below the mouth.

Anyone 12 years of age and older will be legally required to wear a mask. Those over the age of 2 years old are being encouraged to wear a mask but are not legally required.

People who cannot wear a mask or who cannot put on or remove a mask without the assistance of others are exempt. The province notes a person may not be able to wear a mask for a psychological, behavioural or health condition, or due to a physical, cognitive or mental impairment.



Masks may be removed temporarily in indoor public places to identify the individual wearing the mask, to consume food or beverage at a location designated for this purpose, while participating in a sport or fitness activity in a sport facility or while receiving a personal or health service that requires the mask to be removed.

“Education is key, which is why we’re having businesses review their plans and getting the word out to communities in several languages,” Farnworth said.

“Businesses should provide signage on the mandatory mask policy and inform customers about the requirement. Of course, despite any range of efforts, some people will break the rules knowing full well what they’re doing. These measures give police and other enforcement officials the tools to intervene with and penalize problematic individuals and groups.”



1:42

How will new mask requirement in B.C. be enforced? – Nov 19, 2020

To report non-emergency contraventions of this mask order, people are asked to contact their local government’s bylaw office.

Local bylaw officers can help follow-up on concerns and engage police departments and WorkSafe BC as necessary.

If they are unable to reach a local bylaw office, they can contact their local police department’s non-emergency line. Police may be called if someone has become threatening or abusive in response to a request to put on a mask.

Masks are not recommended for children under the age of two, but should be encouraged for children aged two to 12 in public settings. Children over 12 must wear a mask in a public indoor space, unless they are exempt.

Between Aug. 21 and Nov. 20, 59 violation tickets were issued for other COVID-related infractions.

This including 25 \$2,300 tickets to owners or organizers contravening the PHO's order on gatherings and events, nine \$2,300 violation tickets for contravention of the PHO Food and Liquor Serving Premises Order and 25 \$230 tickets issued to individuals who refuse to comply with direction from law enforcement.