

COVID-19: Mandatory Masks – Meeting Room Capacity

Implementation Date: May 25, 2021

Approved by: Jacques Dubé, CAO

Updated: December 14, 2021

1 – Policy Name

COVID-19: Mandatory Masks – Meeting Room Capacity

2 – Purpose

To enhance the safety of HRM employees and help limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus while in the workplace.

3 – Objectives

To clarify management direction on the requirement to wear masks in the workplace and meeting room occupant limitations.

4 – Scope

This policy applies to all Halifax Regional Municipality employees.

5 – Definitions

In the context of this document:

Employee means any person employed by the Municipality.

Employer means Halifax Regional Municipality, also referred to as the Municipality.

Mask means a disposable or reusable non-medical mask that:

- allows for easy breathing
- fits securely to the employee's head with ties or ear loops
- maintains their shape after washing and drying (reusable masks only)
- is changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- is comfortable and does not require frequent adjustment
- is made of tightly woven material fabric (like cotton or linen)
- is large enough to completely (and comfortably) cover the nose and mouth without gaping
- has at least 2 to 3 layers of material (3 layers is best, but masks with 2 layers are still effective). Consider wearing a mask that includes a pocket to accommodate a filter or filter material like a paper towel to provide another layer.
- does not impair vision or interfere with tasks
- is not made of non-breathable materials
- is not made of plastic
- is not secured with tape or other inappropriate materials

- is not made exclusively of materials that easily fall apart, such as tissues
- is not shared with others
- does not have exhalation valves - masks with exhalation valves are not recommended because they don't protect others from COVID-19 and do not limit the spread of the virus
- is not a bandana, scarf, buff, handkerchief or any other clothing item that is not a proper mask as described in the bullets above

6 – Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

The CAO is responsible for:

- Setting the mandatory masks policy and holding business unit leaders accountable to the policy.

Executive Directors

Executive Directors are responsible for:

- Reinforcing the mandatory mask requirement, as outlined in this Policy, in their respective business units.

Directors/Managers/Supervisors

Directors/Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- Educating employees on the requirement to wear masks in the workplace.
- Monitoring the workplace to ensure compliance with the Policy.
- Reinforcing the mandatory mask requirement, as outlined in this Policy, in their respective business units.
- Implementing corrective action where masks are not worn in the workplace as required in this policy.
- Addressing accommodation requests that arise under this policy by employees who have a legitimate medical exemption from wearing a mask.

Human Resources

Human Resources is responsible for:

- Supporting business unit leadership with situations requiring corrective action under this policy.
- Supporting business unit leadership with requests for accommodation under this policy.

Employees

- Wearing a mask as required under this Policy.
- Reporting unsafe work conditions to their immediate Supervisor/Manager as required under the Occupational Health & Safety Act.
- Familiarizing themselves with the mask requirements in their workplace and any other location they attend in the course of their duties as outlined in Section 18 of the Nova Scotia Health Protection Act Order: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/health-protection-act-order-by-the-medical-officer-of-health.pdf>

- Immediately advising their Supervisor/Manager of an accommodation need when they have a legitimate medical exemption from wearing a mask and participating in the accommodation process.

7 – Policy Regulations

Employees are required to wear non-medical masks as follows:

- In common areas (including corridors, lobbies, elevators, washrooms, lunch/break rooms, meeting rooms), in areas where there is interaction with the public, or in any other circumstances where it may not be possible to achieve 2 metres/6 feet distancing.
- When driving in corporate vehicles with other employees and passengers.
- While performing tasks where physical distancing is not possible and no other mitigation is in place.
- While in any place where masks are required in accordance with Section 18 of the Nova Scotia Health Protection Act Order: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/health-protection-act-order-by-the-medical-officer-of-health.pdf>

Meeting Room Occupant Load Limitations:

- Employee gathering limits of 50% of capacity, to a maximum of 150 people indoors and 250 outdoors.

Employees who do not comply with the requirement to wear masks in the workplace may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

All employees are permitted to wear non-medical masks at any other time as a precaution when in the workplace.

8 – Repeal

This policy repeals any business unit policy or Safe Work Practice on Masks that was issued earlier in the COVID-19 pandemic.

9 – Effective Date

December 14, 2021

10 – Related Policies and Practices

N/A

11 – Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and amended in accordance with Public Health guidelines and the Nova Scotia Health Protection Act Order.

12 – Contact

Employee Services, Human Resources - MyHR@halifax.ca

13 – Attachments

N/A