

## Face covering will be mandatory in York Region

Face coverings will be mandatory in King and throughout York Region, effective Friday. This applies to anyone visiting enclosed public spaces in York. You must use a face mask or covering to reduce the spread of COVID-19. York Regional Council endorsed a recommendation last Thursday from York Region Medical Officer of Health Dr. Karim Kurji to issue an instruction requiring operators of enclosed public spaces in York Region to have a policy in place that prohibits persons from entering premises of the establishment if the person is not wearing a face mask or covering. This policy is subject to appropriate exemptions. York Regional Council remains committed to the health and safety of our residents, said York Region chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson. Businesses open to the public have worked diligently to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Face masks or coverings will play a key role for the continued successful re-opening of the economy and to safeguard our residents and visitors. Effective Friday, July 17 at 12:01 a.m., business owners and operators in York Region must have a policy in place to prohibit people from entering if they are not wearing a face mask or covering and must place approved York Region signage on the premises. Outdoor settings and indoor spaces not open to the public are excluded. Additionally, a face mask or covering is not required at home with immediate family members, while eating on a restaurant patio or in the workplace where other standards apply, such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act. There is growing public health evidence that widespread use of face masks or coverings when used with other public health recommendations is effective in the fight against COVID-19, said Dr. Kurji. This includes physical distancing in public spaces, frequently washing your hands and staying home when you are sick. We will get through this, but only if everyone does their part to protect the health and safety of everyone in our communities. In both indoor and outdoor settings, face masks or coverings do not represent a substitute for physical distancing. This instruction is to be applied in good faith and will be used primarily as an opportunity to educate people on the use of face masks or coverings, combined with other on-going recommended public health practices. The instruction will remain in place until Monday, Nov. 30, at 11:59 p.m. The new rules apply to premises (or any portion thereof) which are used as a place of business for the sale or offering for sale of goods or services, and includes a mall or similar structure which contains multiple places of business. That includes churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, or other places of worship, community centres including indoor recreational facilities, libraries, art galleries. Banquet halls, convention centres, arenas, stadiums, and other event spaces are also included. Common areas of hotels, motels and other short-term rentals, such as lobbies, elevators, meeting rooms or other common use facilities. The bylaw does not apply to schools, post-secondary institutions, child care facilities, apartment buildings and condominiums, including their common areas. Wearing a face mask or covering when in public or other settings is not a replacement for proven measures such as handwashing and physical distancing or at least two metres.