



COVID-19 INFORMATION

FACE COVERINGS BYLAW 32/2020

Frequently Asked Questions for Public

October 20, 2020

Note: Updated information is highlighted

Please remember to be kind and respectful. Exceptions to the Face Covering Bylaw exist and not all members of the community can safely wear a face covering.

What is the Face Covering Bylaw?

Effective August 8, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., face coverings are required to be worn in all indoor public places within St. Albert and in vehicles for hire.

As of August 1, face coverings are required inside all civic facilities and on St. Albert Transit.

Indoor public places are any indoor property, publicly or privately owned, accessible by the public. This includes retail locations, restaurants, entertainment venues and more. The bylaw is in effect until December 31, 2020.

To review the Face Coverings Bylaw, visit stalbert.ca/facecovers.

UPDATED: What is a face covering?

A face covering, which includes any medical or non-medical mask, fully covers the mouth, nose and chin, and can include a cloth face covering like a homemade mask, scarf or a bandana.

NEW: As per the City of St. Albert Face Covering Bylaw amendment on October 19, 2020, a face covering includes a face shield. A face shield is made of plastic or other inflexible material that creates a barrier over the face of the person wearing the device but does not make close contact with the wearer's skin upon or around the nose and mouth.

For more information on the types of Personal Protective Equipment available, when they should be used and how they should fit, visit the Government of Alberta's [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) and Non-medical Masks for Non-Health Care Settings](#).

NEW: Can I wear a face shield?

Yes. On October 19, 2020, St. Albert City Council amended the Face Coverings Bylaw so that face shields were included as part of the face covering definition. This amendment was made to provide additional clarity to residents.

Why do we have a Face Covering Bylaw?

This measure was introduced after careful consideration by Council based on various factors including: the public health recommendations from the Province, continuing Alberta's relaunch strategy and regional considerations.

Where are people required to wear a face covering?

An indoor public place is any enclosed space that the public can access including:

- Retail locations
- City facilities (e.g. St. Albert Place, Servus Credit Union Place, Fountain Park Recreation Centre, Jarome Iginla/Kinex arenas, St. Albert Public Library)
- Restaurants
- Entertainment venues
- Transit stations and enclosed and semi-enclosed transit shelters
- Places of worship
- Hotels
- Face coverings are also required on St. Albert Transit and within Vehicles for Hire.

Please remember the legislation also applies to you and your employees when in the publicly accessible areas of your business, unless you or your employees fall under one of the exceptions.

Where does the bylaw NOT apply?

The bylaw does not apply to a school or other educational institution, a hospital or other health care facility, or a child care facility.

Also, the bylaw does not cover parts of a generally publicly accessible place designated as “staff only” areas; however, the owner or occupier can choose to require their employees to wear coverings in the “staff only” places if they so desire.

Who doesn't have to wear a face covering?

As per the bylaw, the City understands there may be reasons why people are unable to wear a face covering. The exceptions outlined in the bylaw are:

- Children under 10 years of age;
- People who cannot put on, use or remove a face covering without assistance;
- People who are unable to wear a face covering due to a mental or physical condition, disability or limitations or because of one of the grounds on which discrimination is prohibited under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*;
- People who are eating or drinking while seated in a designated food and drink seating area or as part of a religious or spiritual ceremony;
- Those engaged in swimming or other water activities, or engaged in physical exercise or other physical activities, within designated areas;
- People providing or receiving care or assistance for a mental or physical condition, disability or limitation and a face covering would hinder providing or receiving that caregiving or assistance;
- People providing or receiving a service that requires personal consultation if that activity occurs in a closed office or meeting room and all participants in the

personal consultation at all times maintain physical separation of at least 2 metres from each other.

- A participant in a dance, theatrical or musical public performance, if all participants in the performance maintain at least 2 metres physical distance from each other and do not enter the area where the public is viewing the performance; or
- A transit operator, if barriers are in place to create physical distancing between the transit operator and passengers in the transit vehicle.

What if I don't want to wear a mask?

Business owners can choose whether to serve a customer, or not to serve a patron, who is not wearing a face covering.

Please remember that some people may be exempt from the bylaw and are not required to wear a face covering. Proof is not required if someone has an exception.

Will the City be enforcing the bylaw?

Creating awareness in the community about required face coverings in indoor public places is the City's primary focus and will play a key role in overall compliance.

The bylaw does include a section on enforcement for a Municipal Enforcement Officer to administer a penalty if necessary.

What happens if a Municipal Enforcement Services officer sees I'm not wearing a mask?

No Peace Officer can force you to show proof that you are within an exemption, however, if the Peace Officer for whatever reason does not believe you are within an exemption and therefore lays a charge against you of not wearing a face covering in a place where one is required, and if you wish to contest the charge in Court, then you will have to show proof to the Judge or Justice of the Peace that you fall within one of the s. 4 exemption categories, if you expect to be found not guilty on that basis. Individuals who believe a Peace Officer's actions were inappropriate can make a complaint through [this process](#).

What do I do if I have concerns regarding people not wearing face coverings in indoor public spaces?

- Please call Municipal Enforcement at 780-458-7700 if you have any concerns about public compliance.
- Call the RCMP at 780-458-7700 should you require assistance related to a criminal matter such as a customer causing a disturbance.
- Call 911 for any emergency.

Do face coverings need to be worn in places of worship?

Places of worship are included in the bylaw as they are enclosed buildings that members of the public have access to. However, the bylaw also provides an exception in that those

attending places of worship are permitted to temporarily remove their face covering to consume food or drink as part of a religious or spiritual ceremony.

Do my I need to wear masks if I can physical distance?

Yes, you must wear a face covering even if you can physical distance. Wearing a face covering is one of the many important elements in keeping each other safe. Other ways include:

- Staying home if you are ill
- Maintaining two metres from others not in your household or cohort
- Washing or sanitizing your hands and coughing/sneezing into your elbow or a tissue

Why isn't that person wearing a face covering?

There are exceptions to the bylaw where some individuals may fall within. Exceptions are listed at stalbert.ca/facecovers. Please remember to be kind and respectful as not all members of the community can safely wear a face covering.

If you see someone not wearing a face covering, please remember the bylaw makes it an offence punishable by a \$100 fine to harass or intimidate a person who is not wearing a face covering as a result of any exception.

Why do I have to a wear a mask?

The Government of Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health has encouraged Albertans to wear non-medical masks and face coverings in public places to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Face coverings are an additional tool to current practices of washing and sanitizing hands, not touching your face and maintaining physical distancing.

Other public health measures, such as staying home when you are sick, should still be followed. The City is doing everything possible to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our community. Wearing a face covering is one of the many important elements in keeping each other safe.

Why does St. Albert need mandatory masks if there are almost no COVID-19 cases?

The number of COVID-19 cases have remained low due to proactive, preventative measures such as physical distancing and many residents working from home where possible.

The decision to make masks mandatory has been delegated to local authorities by the Province. Face coverings are an additional tool to current practices of washing and sanitizing hands, not touching your face and maintaining physical distance.

Edmonton's and St. Albert's residents cross city limits daily for business, errands and leisure purposes. Let's stay safe and healthy together.

What do I do if I fall under the bylaw's exceptions list?

If you are a person whose exception falls within the list in the Face Coverings Bylaw (32/2020), do you not have to do anything different other than maintain current public health order practices such as:

- Staying home if you are ill
- Maintaining two metres from others not in your household or cohort
- Washing or sanitizing your hands and coughing/sneezing into your elbow or a tissue

If you are asked, or reminded, to wear a face covering in a public indoor space, you can simply state, "Thank you for letting me know. I fall within the bylaw exceptions and cannot wear a face covering."

Please note: The bylaw also makes it an offence punishable by a \$100 fine to harass or intimidate a person who is not wearing a face covering as a result of any exception.

Will the City be giving away free masks at City facilities?

The City will continue to distribute non-medical face masks on behalf of the Government of Alberta and its COVID-19 relaunch strategy. They will be available from August 1 until supplies run out at all publicly accessible City facilities.

Remember to be considerate of others and be aware that some individuals may have medical reasons or circumstances that interfere with wearing a face covering.

For more information, visit stalbert.ca/facecovers.