

COVID-19 - Mandatory Mask Policy Accommodations Process

Category:	Health, Safety, and Security
Number:	HS26
Responsibility:	Health & Safety
Approval:	Vice President, Finance and Operations
Amendments:	To be reviewed as needed, as government and public health directive changes through the COVID-19 pandemic

POLICY STATEMENT

Algoma University continues to take proactive steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our community members, across all three campuses. As part of those measures, the University is implementing this policy requiring non-medical face masks to be worn indoors in all common spaces on University property, as per Provincial direction.

The policy will remain in effect as long as the Provincial Government and the Ontario Public Health (OPH) authorities recommend that mask wearing is necessary in indoor public spaces. This policy is subject to change and extension as government and public health guidance and understanding of COVID-19 evolves.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the University community; students, staff, faculty, administration, members of the Board of Governors, tenants, visitors and guests. All members of the University community have a responsibility to uphold the principles outlined in this policy.

PURPOSE

Algoma University recognizes the challenges that have been faced with the COVID-19 Pandemic and is doing their part to help keep our community safe. Our guiding principles are as follows:

1. The health, safety and well being of the Algoma University community, and our students' success, is the University's primary focus as we resume in-person/on-site services.
2. The University will continue to align its approach with applicable government and public health directives and guidelines.

3. The University is committed to accessibility, equity and respectful work/study environment, and has taken into consideration the unique needs of our different community members, including as needed, accommodating individual health needs.

MASK REQUIREMENTS

Employees, Guests and Students are required to wear non-medical masks or face coverings in all public, common-use indoor University spaces (including University-owned and leased spaces).

Examples of public spaces include but not limited to lobbies, elevators, hallways and corridors, stairwells, washrooms, service, common areas in residences or study lounges, meeting rooms, classrooms, research and teaching labs, shared or open-space offices (where distancing cannot be achieved), and other locations used in common where practicing physical distancing may be difficult or unpredictable, such as libraries.

Definition:

Non-medical mask or face covering means a medical or non-medical (cloth) three layer, facemask, that covers the nose, mouth and chin without gapping and is fixed to the face with straps, ties or elastic, either behind the head or with ear loops.

Exceptions:

Non-medical masks or face coverings are not required:

- when an individual is required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) in lieu of a non-medical mask or face covering
- when wearing a non-medical mask or face covering would create a risk to the individual related to their work, as determined by the Management Officer and People & Culture (Health and Safety)
- while taking part in organized University community activities that interfere with mask-wearing (e.g., athletic or fitness activities, playing a musical instrument) in accordance with public health guidelines
- when eating or drinking
- **Employees only:**
 - in employee offices when the physical layout allows individuals to maintain a consistent two-meter physical distance and/or barriers are in place
 - inside meeting rooms when the physical layout allows individuals to maintain a consistent two-meter physical distance and/or barriers are in place
 - *if guests or students are a part of these meetings, masks by **all** participants **are** required*

General Mask Guidelines:

- it is recommended to wear a medical mask but is not mandatory
- Should you wish to wear a 3ply cloth mask, it is encouraged to wear a medical mask underneath it
- face shields are not an acceptable use of a mask on their own
- wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds prior to and after donning your mask
- make sure the mask is right side up and properly oriented
- put the elastic around your ears, or tie the strings behind your head and make sure the mask fits your face with no gaps
- make sure the mask covers your face from bridge of nose to chin
- if your mask has one, bend the nose fitting to fit your nose
- don't touch the mask while you're wearing it
- wear your mask properly at all times that you are required to do so. See below diagram.
- do not remove your mask when speaking with others
- when removing it, grab the mask from the strings or elastic, don't touch the front

- for non-medical masks, clean as needed (wash with hot water and dry, you do not need to boil or sterilize your mask, do not microwave your mask)
- wash your hands again

How to properly wear a mask



Reminder: Non-medical face masks/coverings **WILL NOT** guarantee the wearer protection of contracting COVID-19 or any other disease. It is designed to stop the wearer from sneezing and coughing onto others, and to remind you to not touch your face, mouth or nose.

ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

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

- if they require accommodation (e.g., for reasons of disability, religion, or other) under Ontario's Human Rights Code
- if they have a medical condition including a physical condition, mental health condition, or other health concern that makes it difficult to wear a mask or face covering, including a medical condition that makes it difficult to breathe, or to put on and remove a mask or face covering without assistance, or someone who is unconscious or incapacitated
- where the ability to see the mouth is beneficial 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

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 this policy.

In specific circumstances where an individual's health and safety is at risk, who is unable to wear a non-medical mask or face covering due to one of the reasons above, or some other similar reason, may be required to provide supporting documentation to the University on a confidential basis. Employees will work directly with the Department of People & Culture and students will be asked to register with Accessibility Services.

EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

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

Signage is posted throughout the buildings as reminders of mask requirements.

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, the impact on others in that place and the number of times an individual needs to be spoken to about following the policy.