Safety Notice

September 15, 2020

In Toronto, over the last several weeks, we are seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases, which is concerning for all of us. As the Medical Officer of Health indicated last week, it isn't a matter of if we'll see more COVID-19 activity in our city, it's a matter of when. We need to be vigilant in our actions to keep each other safe as we go to work, send our kids back to school, and spend more time inside as cooler weather arrives.

Mandatory use of face coverings or masks on the TTC and in indoor public spaces throughout Ontario has been in place since the beginning of July. The TTC is introducing further protective measures for its employees in response to the increase in ridership, re-opening of schools, and the inevitable resurgence of COVID-19 infections in our community. Starting Tuesday, September 17, 2020, face coverings or masks are mandatory in all shared TTC spaces, **both indoors and outdoors.** This also applies to operators when they are behind the protective barrier or in the cab. It is important to remember that when you are wearing a mask or face covering it must cover your nose, mouth and chin, without gapping. I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation with this policy and for helping to continue stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Betty Hasserjian
Chief Safety Officer (Acting)

Where do I get reliable information?

TTC

COVID-19.Info@ttc.ca
ttc.ca/EmployeeHealth

Occupational Hygiene and Environment section
416-393-3320

Toronto Public Health
Toronto.ca/health

Health Canada
Canada.ca/health

Should you travel?

Public Health Agency of Canada
travel.gc.ca

The Government of Canada advises that you avoid all nonessential travel outside of Canada.

COVID-19 Update:
Mandatory mask use

How does this apply to TTC employees?

All TTC employees are expected to follow this new policy. Management will be monitoring compliance and ensuring adherence to this new policy.

The following are some examples illustrating when face coverings are and are not required.

Face covering required	Face covering not required
• Operators in buses, streetcars and subways, even if you are behind the protective barrier or in your cab	• Common outdoor areas not controlled or owned by TTC • Personal vehicles
• Workstations with no barriers and those with low barriers where employees have a line of sight with each other	• In a fully enclosed office • In an office cubicle with partitions that extend above your head and separate you from your coworkers
• In-person chat (during work or on break) with another TTC employee while on TTC property or in a TTC work area	• Phone chat with a TTC employee
• Common indoor areas (TTC owned and leased) – kitchen, break room, meeting room, photocopier area, bathroom, hallway, stairwell, lobby, elevators and lunchrooms	• Individual offices when individuals are working alone • When eating or drinking, physical distance must be maintained at all times
	• When presenting/leading meetings, safety talks and job briefings (where masks create a barrier to communication), physical distance must be maintained at all times
• Common outdoor areas owned and/or controlled by TTC. This includes upon entering and immediately outside TTC properties (e.g. Hillcrest yard, Davisville etc.) or a TTC designated work area (e.g. street construction)	• Common outdoor areas not controlled or owned by TTC • Designated smoking areas, while smoking, physical distance must be maintained at all times
• Non-revenue vehicles with two people present	• Non-revenue vehicles with only a driver and no one else is present

Does this mean we can focus less on physical distancing (keeping at least 2 metres apart)?

No, masks or face coverings are not a replacement for physical distancing, but an added measure. Physical distancing must be maintained at all times where possible.

Why are we asking employees to wear masks/face coverings outdoors?

The Safety and Environment Department has been conducting physical distancing audits at many work locations over the last couple of months and have observed employees gathering outside in larger groups and not respecting physical distancing guidelines. The health and safety of TTC employees is of paramount importance and we need to do everything we can to ensure it remains that way.

Can I wear a face shield as an alternative to masks or face coverings?

No, according to Toronto Public Health, face shields are not a substitute for face masks/coverings. They lack a seal and may not contain the respiratory droplets of the person wearing them, allowing these germs to spread more easily. Face shields are meant to provide the user eye protection from direct contact to the respiratory droplets of others.

There may be some exceptions to the face covering policy, made for persons with underlying medical conditions and other accommodations – these would be taken on a case by case basis, and would require supporting documentation.

Where can I get a mask or face covering, and replacements?

All TTC employees should have received re-useable cloth face coverings from their work locations. If your mask or face covering is damaged, please speak to your Supervisor. Over the next two weeks, employees will be receiving additional face coverings. If you have not received yours by the end of September, please speak to your Supervisor.

How long will this new policy be in effect for?

This new policy will be in effect until at least December 31, 2020.

Please remember, my mask protects you and your mask protects me. They are a non-invasive measure that also serves as a visual reminder to everyone that we need to be vigilant and continue to maintain physical distance.