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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
Emergency Management BC

### **Mask enforcement updated to align with public health guidance**

VICTORIA – Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, is aligning the Emergency Program Act (EPA) order on face coverings with the provincial health officer's (PHO) recently updated guidance on mask use in fitness facilities.

As outlined in the PHO's indoor individual exercise document, masks are now required to be worn at all times in fitness facilities, including during workouts. The change to the EPA order allows police and other officials to enforce this new guidance at their discretion.

This updated ministerial order on masks ensures a co-ordinated response to COVID-19. For the purposes of this order, a mask or face covering is defined as a medical or non-medical mask that covers the nose and mouth.

Face shields are not a substitute for a mask as there is an opening below the mouth.

All other measures for indoor mask use continue to apply. People who cannot wear a mask, or who cannot put on or remove a mask without the assistance of others, are exempt. A person may not be able to wear a mask for a psychological, behavioural or health condition, or due to a physical, cognitive or mental impairment. This order also includes more expansive wording on exemptions for lip reading, which aligns with the latest PHO direction.

Anyone without a mask in an indoor public place, or who refuses to comply with the direction of an enforcement officer, including the direction to leave the space, or who responds with abusive or belligerent behaviour, may be subject to a \$230 fine.

To report non-emergency contraventions of this mask order, contact your local government's bylaw office. Local bylaw officers can help follow up on concerns and engage police departments and WorkSafeBC as necessary. If unable to reach a local bylaw office, contact your local police department's non-emergency line. Police may be called if someone becomes threatening or abusive in response to a request to put on a mask.

### **Quick Facts:**

- Examples of fitness facilities include gyms, fitness studios and dance studios.
- Masks are not recommended for children under the age of two years, but should be encouraged for children aged two to 12 in public settings. Unless they are exempt, children over the age of 12 must wear a mask in public indoor spaces.
- Violation tickets expand the Province's compliance and enforcement toolkit to support the COVID-19 response. Police and other provincial compliance and enforcement officers will independently exercise discretion to issue tickets for EPA order violations under the Offence Act's Violation Ticket Administration and Fines Regulation.

- If violation tickets do not act as a deterrent, or in cases of particularly egregious contraventions or for repeat offenders, police can recommend charges in relation to the offence.
- Working in partnership with local governments and other agencies, a comprehensive and integrated compliance and enforcement regime has been built. Violation tickets build on existing tools, such as the ability to suspend or revoke the business licence or liquor licence of problematic operators.

**Learn More:**

For information on the latest PHO orders and guidance, non-medical issues like travel recommendations and how to manage social isolation: [www.gov.bc.ca/COVID-19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/COVID-19)

For more information and latest medical updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC.

Or visit its website: <http://www.bccdc.ca>

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