

Peel Region to make wearing masks mandatory when inside public facilities

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

If you're planning on doing any shopping within Peel Region anytime soon, don't forget to wear a face mask. People will soon be required to cover their faces when inside a public facility to help lower the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Alongside Peel's Medical Officer of Health Dr. Lawrence Loh, Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson, Mayor of Brampton Patrick Brown and Mayor of Mississauga Bonnie Crombie informed the public of a 'temporary by-law' that would require residents of the Peel communities to wear masks at all times when indoors to avoid spread of COVID-19.

'Peel Public Health already strongly supports the use of non-medical masks where distancing is not possible and on transit. A time-limited, broader bylaw mandating when and where non-medical masks must be used further strengthens these recommendations and protects Peel residents,' said Dr. Loh. 'Together with the other 'core four' behaviours of physical distancing handwashing, getting tested and staying home if sick, more consistent use of non-medical masks by all residents in public spaces will help drive down cases and bring this first wave to a close in our community.'

Peel will now join the likes of Guelph, Wellington County and Dufferin County in making face mask mandatory in public places.

Several municipal leaders, including those in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon, are taking the next steps into putting this new bylaw in place for their communities. Toronto city council voted in favour of the mandatory masks which will be put into effect on (July 7).

'We may be done with the pandemic, but it is not done with us. We need to remain vigilant and take precautionary measures to reduce the severity of a second wave in the fall. Mandatory masks in indoor settings are something our residents have been asking for. Together with the other 'core four' behaviours, this will allow for a wider reopening of businesses,' said Mayor Crombie.

With similar sentiments, the Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown stated, 'We need to work together to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community. Wearing a non-medical mask in public spaces will do just that by keeping others safe. Follow Peel Public Health and the Government of Ontario's guidelines on how to properly wear, fit, remove, and clean your non-medical mask to promote health and safety for all.'

The Ontario government has left it to individual health regions to decide whether or not to mandate the wearing of face masks, rather than introduce a blanket bylaw for all.

Premier Doug Ford announced during a press conference on Tuesday (June 30), that he encourages municipalities to implement mandatory masks, but feels it's not necessary to be implemented provincewide.

'If you're in large groups, wear a mask. Wear a face covering of some sort. And practise social distancing, that's the golden rule' said Premier Ford. 'Each region has the authority to make their own rules. With a province this size, I encourage it. I encourage and compliment the regions that are doing. (like) Toronto and Peel.'

He added, 'Each public health area will have the authority to put in each two ways, either they do it through Section 22 of the Health Act, or they do it through the bylaw and go through council.'

Councils within Peel Region are planning to discuss the mandatory masks, within the next weeks

'Wearing a mask when in a public space has been proven to be effective in stopping the spread of COVID 19,' said Mayor Allan Thompson. 'As a Region we are coming together to protect the health of our residents and communities.'

Municipalities will be discussing the temporary bylaw in council meetings throughout the next couple weeks.

For more information please visit peelregion.ca.