



Bylaw 2250, the Mandatory Facial Covering Bylaw FAQ (November 18th, 2020)

Why has the Town of Edson enacted the bylaw at this time?

The Town of Edson Emergency Coordination Centre, with the support of Council, enacted the bylaw for a number of reasons. The Edson zone (Central Yellowhead County) currently has 5 active cases of COVID-19 listed by Alberta Health Services. But other factors were also taken into consideration including: a sharp increase in cases in the surrounding areas (Hinton, Drayton Valley, Whitecourt, Westview), hospital capacity in the Province, and the Provincial request to help get numbers under control to avoid further restrictions.

But our numbers didn't reach the 10 active case threshold, did they?

No, the Edson zone (Central Yellowhead County) currently has 5 active cases of COVID-19 listed by Alberta Health Services. This is not the only criteria used to enact the bylaw.

The triggers include:

- There are 10 or more active cases within the Edson Region
- There is a persistent spread of active cases within the community
- There is an outbreak within local schools, which may or may not result in a closure of the school(s)
- A persistent and active Infection rate profile of neighboring communities (e.g. Hinton, Whitecourt, Evansburg, etc.)

In this case, hospital capacity and other information from the Emergency Coordination Centre's meetings with Alberta Health Services also were taken into consideration.

What spaces does the bylaw include?

The bylaw covers all indoor, or substantially enclosed, Public Place or in any Public Transportation Vehicle. A "Public Place" means any property, whether publicly or privately owned, to which members of the public have access as of right or by express or implied invitation, whether on payment of any fee or not. Basically, any indoor space the general public has access to.

What qualifies as a face covering?

Face covering under this bylaw means a medical or non-medical mask or other face covering that fully covers the nose, mouth, and chin, but excludes a mask with an exhalation valve.

What are the exemptions?

- persons under 2 years of age;
- persons who are unable to place, use, or remove Face Coverings without assistance;
- persons providing care or assistance to a person with a disability where a Face Covering would hinder that caregiving or assistance;
- persons consuming food or drink in designated seating areas or as part of a religious or spiritual ceremony;
- persons engaging in aquatic activities or physical exercise; or
- persons engaging in services that require the temporary removal of a Face Covering.

What if I can't wear a mask or just don't want to wear one?

The bylaw is designed to protect the population by having everyone participate. If you cannot wear a mask, or are uncomfortable wearing a mask, there are many businesses offering curbside pickup or delivery services and we encourage you to remain out of the public spaces as much as possible. Face shields are also an alternative being utilized to help alleviate some concerns.

How is this being enforced?

While the intention of this bylaw is not punitive, those who refuse to follow the bylaw could be subject to a \$100 fine for a first offence, and \$200 for subsequent offences.

How long will this be in effect?

This bylaw will be in effect for a MINIMUM of 2 weeks and reviewed by the ECC based on the criteria of the bylaw, current risk levels in the region, and direction of the Provincial Government at the time.

What about school buses and schools? Will this mean any changes?

For the most part schools and school buses are not spaces open to the general public. As such, they fall under their own rules and regulations.

For more information on the Mandatory Facial Covering Bylaw, please visit www.edson.ca/bylaws.