

## **Mask FAQ-Places of Worship**

### **Are masks required in places of worship?**

Yes. People attending places of worship will be required to wear a mask.

### **Is physical distancing still required?**

In instances where people are seated and every person continuously wears a mask, physical distancing of one metre is acceptable. Otherwise, keeping two metres of distance from others applies.

### **Are masks required while singing?**

Parishioners must wear masks while singing. It should be noted that singing during a pandemic is a high-risk activity. The chance of expelling drops of liquid that could contain COVID-19 increases during singing, shouting, cheering or playing wind instruments. Having a group of people singing increases the number of these small droplets. Additional risk factors include longer durations of more than 30 minutes and group singing within indoor settings.

### **Do officiants and performers have to wear a mask?**

Performers or officiants who are performing activities that require vocalization like talking or singing at a faith gathering, wedding, funeral, social event, etc. are exempt from wearing a mask but they should stay four metres away from others during their performance.

### **How should places of worship handle the implementation of this new mask policy?**

While there is no one-size fits all approach, places of worship should consider how they will communicate this new policy. An option could be to post signage outlining the mask requirement and providing additional options for those unable to wear a mask including sharing services online.

During the first few weeks, places of worship could consider providing masks for anyone who has forgotten theirs..

It's important to note that some people cannot wear masks for medical reasons and that sometimes these reasons are not visible. New Brunswickers are encouraged to be kind and show compassion and understanding.

### **Why is New Brunswick making masks mandatory in public spaces?**

When worn properly and used along with other public health measures like frequent hand washing, proper cough/sneeze etiquette and physical distancing, masks are effective in limiting the spread of COVID-19.

### **Who is exempt from wearing a face mask?**

Some people are not able to wear masks for various reasons. It's important to remember that these reasons may not always be visible to others. New Brunswickers should always treat each other with kindness, respect and understanding.

Examples of people not required to wear a mask are below:

- Children under the age of two;
- People with a medical condition, including a mental health disorder, that prevents them from wearing a mask;
- Situations that include a person who is deaf or hard of hearing who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate;
- Performer or officiant who is performing activities that require vocalization (like talking or singing) at a faith gathering, wedding, funeral, social event, or arts and culture event;
- People who are receiving medical treatment or receiving a service, that requires it to be removed. In these cases, they may remove their mask for the duration of the treatment or service only;
- As per WorkSafeNB's guidance, face masks do not have to be worn where physical barriers are in place that protect people from potential exposure (e.g. plexiglass barrier). Workers for whom wearing a face mask would introduce a risk to the workers' health and safety related to their work environment may use a face shield as a substitute to the face covering. More information is available [here](#).

Note: between the ages of two and five, children may be able to wear a mask if supervised. This will depend on their ability to tolerate it as well as put it on and take it off.

It is even more important that people exempted from wearing a mask practice physical distancing of staying two metres away from others, wash or sanitize hands frequently and get tested if unwell, even with mild symptoms. It is also recommended that people exempted from wearing a mask avoid, as much as possible, crowded places and plan to do errands during off-peak times when stores are less crowded, or have items delivered if possible.

### **How will this new mask policy be enforced?**

New Brunswickers understand that masks work to prevent the spread of disease. We will rely on New Brunswickers to make good decisions to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.

### **Where is more information available on New Brunswick's mask guidelines?**

More information on mask guidelines is available on GNB's Coronavirus [website](#).