



NOTICE TO PUBLIC AND PROFESSION – COVID-19 UPDATE New Policy on Mask-wearing in Courtrooms and Courthouse

November 20, 2020

Effective Monday, November 23, 2020 people attending the Law Courts Building in Whitehorse for court-related business are required to wear face masks. Everyone is encouraged to bring their own mask, but if you do not have one, a supply will be available in the atrium, or a Sheriff will provide one to you.

This policy applies to people in the entrances, atrium, Court Registry, restrooms, witness and interview rooms, Supreme Court boardroom, Territorial Court boardroom, main floor boardroom, law library, stairways, hallways, and elevators. This policy does not apply to employees of or visitors to the Government of Yukon coming in or out of the Law Courts Building for non-court-related business, as that is the responsibility of the Government of Yukon.

Everyone is required to wear masks in all the courtrooms at all times, with the exceptions set out below and subject to the presiding judge's discretion.

People sitting in the gallery of the courtrooms are required to wear masks at all times.

Counsel in the courtrooms are not required to wear masks when they are in front of the bar at counsel tables, or podiums but are required to wear them at all other times. If counsel wish for their client to sit beside them at counsel table, however, either they or their client or both will be required to wear a mask.

Witnesses are required to wear a mask at all times before and after their testimony, including while walking to the witness stand. Once the witness is in the witness stand, they are not required to wear a mask while testifying.

The presiding judges and other judicial officers in the courtrooms continue to have discretion on the wearing of masks based on the individual circumstances of each case, including the space in the courtroom, the nature of the case, and the parties and participants.

We emphasize that wearing a non-medical face mask is not a substitute for physical distancing and complying with other public health directives. Physical distancing remains the best protection against the transmission of the virus. Hand-washing, hand sanitizing, and staying at home when you have one or more symptoms in the red

category or two or more symptoms in the yellow category (as described in our last updates dated October 30, 2020 and November 2, 2020) are also important ways to reduce transmission of COVID-19. Mask-wearing is an added protection.

This new policy is being put in place as a result of the recent increasing numbers of COVID-19 infections and potential exposures locally, across the country and in Alaska. It is consistent with the directives and recommendations of Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health.



Chief Justice S.M. Duncan



Chief Judge P. Chisholm