

Public Health Agency of Canada's Advice

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has indicated that the use of cloth face coverings in public settings may slow the spread of the virus and help prevent asymptomatic people – those who may have the virus and not know it – from transmitting it to others.

Wearing a cloth face covering is an important additional measure you can take to protect others around you, even if you have no symptoms. It can be useful for when physical distancing is not possible in a transportation setting, such as during physical search procedures at screening checkpoints, or on the aircraft where passengers and flight attendants cannot always keep a two-metre distance.

Transport Canada's new requirement

As of Monday, April 20th, Transport Canada will require air operators to verify that **all travellers have a removable cloth face covering** available for use during their trip, even if the travellers are not showing any symptoms.

When travelling by air, you will be asked to cover your mouth and nose where possible, and must do so when a two-metre distance between you and others cannot be observed. At a minimum,

- at airport screening checkpoints, where the screeners cannot always keep two metres of separation from you;
- when you cannot physically distance from others, or as directed by the airline employees; and
- when directed to do so by a public health order or Public Health official.

If you do not have one available for your trip, the air operator **will be required to deny** you entry into the sterile area, or boarding on the aircraft.

It is **your responsibility** to bring the required cloth face covering to the airport. You will not be provided with one if you do not have one. Consular officials from the government of Canada will not be in a position to provide masks either.

How to make simple cloth face coverings

There are many online resources available with information on how to make simple cloth face coverings. The Public Health Agency of Canada's website (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/instructions-sew-no-sew-cloth-face-covering.html>) provides suggestions for simple "do it yourself" cloth covers that can be easily made from inexpensive materials found at home, or even while travelling. In general, though:

- choose fabric that can be laundered without damage;
- include multiple layers of fabric;
- allow for breathing without restriction; and

- think about having more than one for each traveller, so it can be replaced if damp or soiled.

Cloth coverings should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of your face, be secured with ties or ear loops and cover your face and nose. It should be easy to put on and take off when necessary (e.g., identity verification check).

Exceptions

Cloth face coverings should **not** be worn by:

- children under the age of two;
- anyone who has trouble breathing; or
- anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Also note that you may be asked to remove your face covering for the purpose of identity verification at the boarding gate and the customs-controlled area when you arrive at the Canadian airport or when asked to do so by Canada Border Services Agency officers or public health officials.

You are encouraged to use hand sanitizer before removing and after replacing your face covering.