

Keeping Face Masks Mandatory After COVID-19 Health Order Expires – Ask The Expert



QUESTION

As of July 1, masks are recommended but no longer required in indoor public settings in BC. To err on the side of caution, my employer would like to extend the company's mask policy until the end of July. Can we enforce this rule now that masks are no longer mandatory under the Public Health Order'

ANSWER

Yes

EXPLANATION

You can still require workers and others to wear face masks in common areas, vehicles and other indoor parts of the workplace as a safety policy where social distancing of 2 metres/6 feet can't be maintained. Section 5 of the new BC public health Order (M012) specifically states that 'Nothing in this order prevents an operator from having additional requirements in relation to face coverings.'

I believe that the same principle applies in other provinces that are eliminating mandatory face mask orders like Alberta, although you'd have to check the specific terms of the particular order.

Caveat: In addition, as was the case before the orders changed and face masks were mandatory, you still must make exceptions and exemptions for certain persons for whom wearing a mask might pose undue hazard or difficulty, such as individuals with physical, mental or cognitive impairments, who are under age 12, etc.