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British Columbia's
Office of the Human Rights
Commissioner

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I want to...

File a complaint (<http://www.bchrt.gov.bc.ca/>)

Get legal help (<https://bchrc.net/>)

See reports and submissions
(<https://bchumanrights.ca/resources/reports-and-submissions/>)

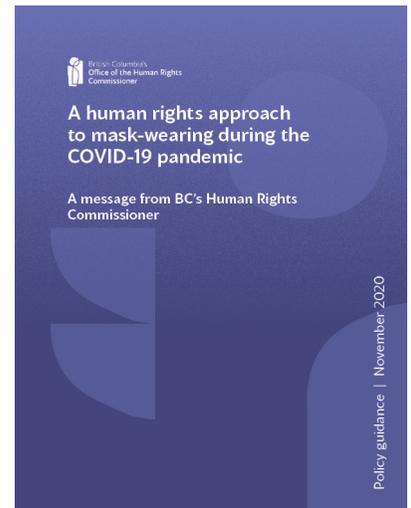
Develop a special program
(<https://bchumanrights.ca/human-rights/special-programs/>)

A human rights approach to mask-wearing during the COVID-19 pandemic

A message from BC's Human Rights Commissioner

Human rights principles must be at the core of our response to the pandemic (<https://bchumanrights.ca/glossary/pandemic/>). When it comes to mask-wearing policies, we need to ensure there is balance between the rights of people who cannot wear a mask on the basis of protected grounds in B.C.'s Human Rights Code (such as disability) and the public health risks, especially to people who are at risk of more severe illnesses.

This policy guidance from BC's Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender details how mask-wearing requirements must accommodate people with disabilities or medical conditions that prevent them from using of non-medical masks.



[Download the PDF ▼ \(https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHRC_Nov2020_Mask-Policy-Guidance_FINAL.pdf\)](https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHRC_Nov2020_Mask-Policy-Guidance_FINAL.pdf)

More resources

- **[Press release: B.C. Human Rights Commissioner issues guidance on COVID-19 mask policies \(https://bchumanrights.ca/news/b-c-human-rights-commissioner-issues-guidance-on-covid-19-mask-policies/\)](https://bchumanrights.ca/news/b-c-human-rights-commissioner-issues-guidance-on-covid-19-mask-policies/)**
- **[Video: Message from Commissioner Govender on human rights during COVID-19 \(https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/covid-19/#video\)](https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/covid-19/#video)** (March 2020)
- **[Commissioner Govender's full policy statement on human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic \(https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/BC-OHRC_COVID19_Policy-V5.pdf\)](https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/BC-OHRC_COVID19_Policy-V5.pdf)**

- **[COVID-19 frequently asked questions from BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner](https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/covid-19/#faq)**
(<https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/covid-19/#faq>)

Please note: A version of this guidance was published prior to the Nov. 19, 2020 mandatory mask order from B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer. The original version is available [here](https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHR Nov2020_Mask-Policy-Guidance_Original-Version.pdf) (https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHR Nov2020_Mask-Policy-Guidance_Original-Version.pdf).



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About us

About the Office (<https://bchumanrights.ca/about-us/about-the-office/>)

Vision and mandate (<https://bchumanrights.ca/about-us/mandate/>)

Our team (<https://bchumanrights.ca/about-us/our-team/>)

Careers (<https://bchumanrights.ca/about-us/careers/>)

Contact (<https://bchumanrights.ca/about-us/contact/>)

Human rights

What are human rights? (<https://bchumanrights.ca/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/>)

Human rights in B.C. (<https://bchumanrights.ca/human-rights/human-rights-in-bc/>)

Complaints (<https://bchumanrights.ca/human-rights/complaints/>)

Special programs (<https://bchumanrights.ca/human-rights/special-programs/>)

Key issues

Discrimination (<https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/discrimination/>)

Decolonization (<https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/decolonization/>)

Poverty (<https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/poverty/>)

Hate (<https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/hate-racism/>)

Detention (<https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/rights-in-detention/>)

Feature: COVID-19 (<https://bchumanrights.ca/key-issues/covid-19/>)

Feature: Disaggregated data (<https://bchumanrights.ca/publications/datacollection/>)

Resources

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Glossary (<https://bchumanrights.ca/glossary/>)

News and events

News (</news>)

Events (</events>)

Media kit (<https://bchumanrights.ca/media-kit/>)

Please note we are not a legal clinic. We do not offer legal advice or provide representation.

To the Indigenous peoples of this place we now call British Columbia:

Today we turn our minds to you and to your ancestors.

You have kept your unceded homelands strong. We are grateful to live and work here.

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