



# Update on Our Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

To Our Valued Co-op Customers, Members and Team Members

17 Feb 2021

With the Government of Saskatchewan's announcement yesterday extending the current restrictions to March 19, 2021, please consider the following (adapted in part from [www.saskatchewanhumanrights.ca](http://www.saskatchewanhumanrights.ca)):

***Due to the spread of COVID-19, a provincial state of emergency was declared on March 18, 2020, and the state of emergency is ongoing.*** Businesses and service providers are governed by the latest Public Health Order and the details of the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan, which provides specific sector/industry rules and requirements for operation during the current public health emergency. ***Effective Thursday, November 19th, wearing a non-medical mask was required in all indoor public spaces in Saskatchewan.***

**Q1. How do the Public Health Orders affect businesses and service providers?**

Businesses and other services providers have an obligation to protect their employees and customers. Reasonable public health and safety measures taken to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially in accordance with directives from Saskatchewan Public Health authorities, are unlikely to violate The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2018.

**Q2. Can individuals with certain health conditions be exempt from wearing a mask? Yes**

**Q3. How can a business or service provider accommodate a person unable to wear a mask, while also protecting the health and safety of employees and other patrons?**

An individual who cannot wear a mask because of a recognized medical condition is entitled to accommodation. The particular accommodation should fit the person's need(s) and the circumstances of the business or service to the point of undue hardship.

**Q4. Does that mean that an individual with a health condition should be allowed in the store?**

No. Reasonable accommodation might include:

- Telephone and online ordering
- Curbside pickup
- Delivery options

- Online payment options
- Use of a portable debit machine
- Pre-pay at pump

**Q5. If an individual is not wearing a mask and is denied entry to a public place, is that discrimination?**

No. A Public Health Order is law.

**Q6. If an individual is not wearing a mask and is denied entry to a public place, is that a violation of their Human Rights?**

No. Reasonable public health and safety measures, in accordance with directives from Saskatchewan Public Health authorities, are unlikely to violate The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2018.

**A Word on Pandemic Fatigue and Apathy**

Pandemic fatigue occurs when something we thought was going to short-lived is now a more chronic or longer term-situation than expected. We gradually grow tired of the necessary safety measures in place over time because it takes a lot of mental effort to maintain a high level of awareness and we let down our guard. Apathy is a lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern. With the recent extension of the Public Health Order restrictions to March 19, 2021 pandemic fatigue and apathy pose a real threat to our best efforts to flatten the curve.

**In Closing**

2020 was a year that saw our team successfully meet many challenges. Despite the supply issues caused by the pandemic, the changing rules around restrictions and the corresponding operational adjustments that had to be made to meet public health orders, we rose to each challenge. In the first couple of months of 2021, we have been faced with some of those same challenges but with the addition of pandemic fatigue and apathy and yet we continue to not only meet, but exceed, the recommended safety measures put in place by the public health authority. Some examples of this can be seen in our sanitization schedules, our communication (both internally and externally), and being early adopters of mandatory mask use for our employees. Additionally, we watch the number of shoppers that we have in our retail locations, monitor the public health announcements and orders, provide free masks to our customers and we work very closely with our local public health authority. I would like to personally thank each one of our team members for their efforts and each of you for your continued patience.

Terry Tremblay,  
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