FAQ - Section 22 Class Order
Spring and Summer Recreational Amenities

General

Q. What is a Class Order?
A. A Class Order is a legal Order that enables Ottawa Public Health (OPH) to enforce public health requirements for group(s) of individuals that it applies to. These efforts are being made to protect residents from potential exposure to COVID-19 and reduce the transmission of COVID-19 within our communities.

Q. Under what authority has this Class Order been issued?
A. Ottawa Public Health’s Medical Officer of Health issued a Class Order under Section 22(5.0.1) of the Health Protection and Promotion Act. This Act authorizes a Class Order to be issued to address the risks associated with the potential transmission of COVID-19 to people who reside or are present in Ottawa.

Q. Why has OPH issued a Section 22 Class Order?
A. Given continued COVID-19 infections in the City of Ottawa, more actions are needed to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Key risk factors of potential transmission include crowding, close contact, prolonged exposure and forceful exhalation. A section 22 Class Order is being issued to limit crowding in parks and ensure physical distancing and wearing masks to decrease or eliminate the risk to health presented by the COVID-19.

Q. Who is this Order directed to?
A. This Order applies to all persons residing in or present in the Ottawa region who:

- Individuals who use an outdoor recreational amenity (as defined in order) that is accessible to the public, for example on City of Ottawa, School Board, NCC and/or Federal properties.
Q. What is the reason masks are being required when on and around certain outdoor amenities?

A. There have been large crowds of people, often not able to maintain 2m physical distance, on and around several outdoor recreational amenities.

In addition to the high levels of COVID-19 transmission in the city, variants of concern (VOC) are becoming more common. Given the opportunity due to lack of distancing and masking, the risk of transmission with VOCs is higher than that of the original COVID-19 virus. In the interest of keeping venues open because they are important to support people’s physical activity and mental health, having masks required enables a level of protection considering the extent of transmission in the community.

Q. Does OPH have evidence of outdoor transmission of COVID-19?

A. COVID-19 levels are high in Ottawa. When COVID-19 levels in the community are high, it’s more likely a person can encounter someone who may have COVID-19 without realizing it; for example, who is asymptomatic. While the risk of transmission of COVID-19, on average, is greater in indoor spaces compared to outdoors, the risk of transmission is elevated in outdoor spaces when there is crowding, close contact, prolonged exposure and forceful exhalation (e.g., individuals physically exerting themselves by participating in sports and recreation activities).

Enforcement

Q. When is the Class Order effective?

A. The Section 22 Class Order will be effective as of Wednesday April 21, 2021, at 12:01 am until May 25, 2021, unless extended by the Medical Officer of Health.

Q. How will this Order be enforced?

A. City of Ottawa Bylaw, Ottawa Police Services, RCMP and Public Health Inspectors have the authority to enforce Class Orders, including issuing tickets with accompanying fines for behaviours in contravention of the Order.
Q. What is the difference between the Section 22 and the City of Ottawa Temporary Mask Bylaw?

A. The Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law (By-law No. 2020–186) requires masks be worn in certain indoor public places including businesses and common areas of multi-unit residential buildings and is issued by the City Council of the City of Ottawa.

This Section 22 requires masks be worn in certain outdoor public places and is issued by the Medical Officer of Health under the provincial Health Protection and Promotion Act to prevent transmission of a communicable disease, such as COVID-19.

Outdoor Recreational Amenities

Q. Do I have to wear a mask when physically active on the designated amenities?

A. Yes. This Section 22 Class Order supersedes the Temporary Mandatory Mask Bylaw; therefore, the exemption for removing a mask when physically active does not apply to these settings.

Q. What are the designated amenities for this Section 22 Class Order?

A. The designated amenities include outdoor playgrounds, play structures, and outdoor play equipment.

Q. Does the Section 22 Class Order apply to amenities on school board properties?

A. Yes, the Class Order does apply to any of the designated amenities which are being used for personal use (e.g. when not part of the school or childcare programming).

Example: if you like to use a play structure on school property outside of operational hours for personal public use, you must follow the orders in the Section 22.
Q. Do kids need to wear masks on play structures?

A. Yes. Masks are required to be worn by everyone on or within 5m of play structures. This includes children and adults. There is an exemption for children less than 2 years of age, or a child who is under five (5) years of age chronologically or developmentally, and who refuses to wear a mask and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver.

Q. What do I need to do while just walking/biking through a park or NCC property on trails?

A. You are not required to wear a mask when on the trails and can maintain physical distancing of a minimum of 2m between yourself and others from outside your household. Ottawa Public Health continues to strongly recommend wearing your mask.