

REGION'S MASK RULES EXTENDED INTO NEXT YEAR

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With the second wave of COVID-19 hitting the area, regional council has voted to keep Halton's mandatory mask bylaw in effect until at least next spring.

The local politicians approved a bylaw amendment Wednesday (Oct. 21) that will see the regulation requiring non-medical masks in indoor public areas extended to May 31, 2021. Council has the option to extend it again beyond that date.

The move follows suit with several other area municipalities that have decided to extend their mandatory masking rules into next spring, including the regions of Waterloo and Niagara. The City of Burlington has also voted to extend its bylaw to Jan. 31, 2021. The Halton-wide bylaw, which applies to those aged five and up, was implemented in July and originally set to expire on Nov. 30.

The regulation was recently amended to include mandatory masking in common



Graham Paine/Torstar
Halton's mask bylaw will now be in effect until May 31, 2021.

areas of condominiums and apartment buildings, such as lobbies, elevators, laundry rooms and mail rooms.

While regional councillors asked staff to look into the issue of mask use in private offices, a report from Bob Gray, Halton's lawyer and commissioner of legislative and planning services, recommended against expanding the bylaw.

He pointed to the provincial government's recent move to make masks mandatory in indoor spaces across Ontario, including offices.

"Staff would also note there is currently no other municipality across Ontario with a mask bylaw that has been expanded to private offices," he wrote.

Council passed a motion that affirmed the Halton bylaw will not be changed to include private offices.

Further details on the bylaw can be found at halton.ca/COVID19.

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