



For immediate release:

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California's Updated Masking Requirements

California has used science to guide our health protection strategies throughout the pandemic. Data show that because of these strategies, we have saved lives. COVID-19 cases and hospitalization continue to decline across the state. Since February 14, cases have declined by 66% and hospitalizations have declined by 48% in California. This is due in large part to the collective efforts of Californians to get vaccinated, get boosted, and wear masks indoors.

The COVID-19 vaccines remain effective in preventing serious disease, hospitalization, and death. Vaccination is still the ultimate exit strategy out of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the percentage of Californians fully vaccinated and boosted continues to increase, areas where vaccine coverage is low remain, putting individuals and communities at greater risk for COVID-19. As a state, we need to remain vigilant.

Accordingly, on February 28, 2022, California Department of Public Health updated the document "[Guidance for the Use of Face Masks](#)." In summary, **effective March 1, 2022**, the requirement for unvaccinated persons to mask in indoor public settings and businesses is being replaced by a strong recommendation that all persons, regardless of vaccination status, continue to mask while in indoor public settings and businesses. This means that in most public settings, a face covering is no longer required by law, however businesses and workplaces can still require masks to enter. In workplaces, employers are subject to the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) or in some workplaces the Cal/OSHA Aerosol Transmissible Diseases (ATD) Standard and should consult those regulations for additional applicable requirements. As of March 1, Cal/OSHA standards for most workplaces will align with statewide guidance on masking. Please be kind and respectful if asked to wear a mask.

Through March 11, 2022, masks will still be required in K-12 schools and childcare facilities. From March 12th, the decision to require masks will be up to the individual entities based on the local situation. Universal masking is still required in certain settings including jails and prisons, healthcare facilities, public transit, shelters, long term care settings, and adult and senior care facilities.

Masks are strongly recommended for all persons, regardless of vaccine status, in indoor public settings and businesses. Surgical masks or higher-level respirators (e.g., N95s, KN95s, KF94s) with good fit are recommended for a higher level of protection. The use of face masks or respirators (N95/KN95) is recommended to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. In a recent study by California scientists, consistent use of a face mask or respirator in indoor public settings was associated with about 50% lower odds of a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result. Use of respirators (N95 or other similar) with higher filtration capacity was associated with the most protection, compared with no mask use¹.

Please click [here](#) for California's updated "[Guidance for the Use of Face Masks](#)."

1. Andrejko KL, Pry JM, Myers JF, et al. Effectiveness of Face Mask or Respirator Use in Indoor Public Settings for Prevention of SARS-CoV-2 Infection — California, February–December 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2022;71:212–216. DOI:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7106e1>