



COVID-19 Mask Requirements

Learn about COVID-19 mask requirements in Massachusetts.

Effective May 29: The Commonwealth's mask order is rescinded. The Department of Public Health has issued a new mask advisory consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's updated guidance. Masks are still mandatory for all individuals on public and private transportation systems (including rideshares, livery, taxi, ferries, MBTA, Commuter Rail and transportation stations), in healthcare facilities and in other settings hosting vulnerable populations, such as congregate care settings.

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Mask Advisory for Unvaccinated Residents

The Department of Public Health issued a public health advisory effective May 29 that advises all unvaccinated residents to continue to wear masks in indoor settings and when they can't socially distance.

[Department of Public Health \(DPH\) Advisory Regarding Face Coverings and Cloth Masks](#) (/doc/updated-advisory-regarding-face-coverings-may-17-2021/download)

Mask Requirements in Certain Locations

Effective May 29, 2021, masks continue to be required for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals at all times in the following locations, subject to the exemptions listed below:

1. **On Public and Private Transportation**, including on the MBTA, commuter rail, buses, ferries, and airplanes, and while in rideshares (Uber and Lyft), taxis, and livery vehicles, as required by the [Centers for Disease Control January 29, 2021 Order](https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/masks/mask-travel-guidance.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/masks/mask-travel-guidance.html>). Face coverings are also required at all times in transportation hubs, including train stations, bus stops, and airports. The requirement applies to riders and workers.
2. **Inside K-12 public schools, collaboratives, approved special education schools** and as otherwise required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The requirement applies to students, teachers, and staff
3. **Healthcare facilities** licensed or operated by the Commonwealth and healthcare practice locations of any provider licensed by a professional board which sits within the Department of Public Health or the Division of Professional Licensure. These settings include nursing homes, rest homes, emergency medical services, hospitals, physician and other medical and dental offices, urgent care settings, community health centers, vaccination sites, behavioral health clinics, and Bureau of Substance and Addiction Services (BSAS) facilities. This requirement applies to patients, residents, staff, vendors and visitors.
4. **Congregate care facilities** or programs operated, licensed, certified, regulated, authorized, or funded by the Commonwealth. These settings include the common areas of assisted living residences, group homes, residential treatment programs, and facilities operated, licensed, certified, regulated, authorized, or funded by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Youth Services (DYS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS), the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). This requirement applies to clients, residents, staff, vendors and visitors.
5. **Emergency shelter programs**, including individual and family homeless shelters, domestic violence and sexual assault shelters, veterans' shelters, and shelters funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development. This requirement applies to guests, staff, vendors and visitors.
6. **Houses of Correction, Department of Correction prisons, jails, and other correctional facilities.** This requirement applies to people who are detained or incarcerated, staff, vendors and visitors.
7. **Health Care and Day Services and Programs operated, licensed, certified, regulated, or funded by the Commonwealth including the Executive Office of Health and Human Services or one of its agencies.** These settings include adult day health, day habilitation, Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), psychosocial rehabilitation club houses, brain injury centers and clubhouses, day treatment, partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient programs, recovery support centers and center-based day support programs. This requirement applies to staff, visitors, vendors and consumers.

8. **Home health care workers**, including Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) and Home Health Aides in community and home-based settings where they are providing patient-facing care; provided, however, the requirement shall only apply to the worker providing care.

The following persons are exempt from the face coverings requirement:

- Children under 5 years old.
- Persons for whom a face mask or covering creates a health risk or is not safe because of any of the following conditions or circumstances:
 - the face mask or covering affects the person's ability to breathe safely;
 - the person has a mental health or other medical diagnosis that advises against wearing a face mask or covering;
 - the person has a disability that prevents them from wearing a face mask or covering; or
 - the person depends on supplemental oxygen to breathe.

Additional Resources

DPH Order Regarding Face Coverings to be Worn in Certain Settings

(<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dph-mask-order-may-28-2021/download>)

DPH Guidance for Wearing Face Masks in Certain Settings

(<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dph-guidance-for-wearing-face-masks-in-certain-settings/download>)

How to properly wear a mask or face-covering

When you wear a cloth mask, it should:

- Cover your nose and mouth,
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face,
- Be secured with ties or ear loops,
- Include multiple layers of fabric,
- Allow for breathing without restriction, and
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

When putting on and taking off a mask, do not touch the front of it, you should only handle the ties or ear straps, and make sure you wash the cloth mask regularly. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after touching the mask.

Cloth masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Basic instructions on [How to Use Face Coverings Effectively \(/doc/use-face-coverings-effectively/download\)](/doc/use-face-coverings-effectively/download) are available in multiple languages on [COVID-19 Printable Fact Sheets \(/info-details/covid-19-printable-fact-sheets\)](/info-details/covid-19-printable-fact-sheets).