



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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GUIDANCE FOR WEARING FACE MASKS IN CERTAIN SETTINGS

Effective October 13, 2022

On October 13, 2022, the Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Health issued COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Order 2022-19 updating the requirements for wearing masks in certain settings.

This guidance is issued pursuant to that Order to further clarify who is required to wear masks and in what settings. For particular settings, the Department of Public Health, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and its constituent agencies may issue additional guidance to further clarify and implement the terms of the Order. Facilities and providers subject to this Order must also comply with federal rules, as applicable.

Masks continue to be required in the settings defined below, except for when eating, drinking, sleeping, or as provided for in applicable guidance, and for an individual in a group that is exempt from the Order.

In each of the settings listed below, Persons in Massachusetts over the age of 5 years old are required to wear a mask over their mouth and nose as outlined below:

- I. Non-residential healthcare facilities and programs licensed or operated by the Commonwealth
 - Staff, patients, vendors, and visitors must all wear masks at the following sites:
 - hospitals, emergency medical services, primary care and urgent care settings,
 - community health centers and clinics or other licensed medical/clinical settings that care for patients with acute illness and/or immunocompromised patients (e.g. oncology, rheumatology, immunology) .

- II. Healthcare practice settings of any provider licensed by a professional board which sits within the Department of Public Health or the Division of Occupational Licensure
 - Staff, patients, vendors, and visitors must all wear masks at the following sites: vaccination sites, primary care and urgent care settings, and any medical/clinical settings that primarily care for patients with acute illness and/or immunocompromised patients.
 - Only staff and vendors must wear masks at the following sites: adult day health programs, dental offices, speech, occupational and physical therapy settings and other freestanding medical/clinical settings that do not primarily care for patients with acute illness or immunocompromised patients.
 - Freestanding, outpatient behavioral health settings are not subject to the requirements of this Order. Masks are optional for staff, patients, vendors, and visitors in these

settings.

- III. In skilled nursing facilities and residential care facilities licensed or operated by the Commonwealth:
 - masks are required for staff and visitors.
 - Masks are optional for residents as further described in *DPH Guidance: Caring for Long-Term Care Residents During the COVID-19 Response*.
- IV. **For 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.** This requirement only applies to the worker providing care.
- V. **On transportation provided by the Commonwealth's Human Service Transportation (HST) Brokerage system. Drivers and other staff on transportation provided by the HST Brokerage system must wear masks.**

The fit of masks should be as follows:

- Cover the nose and mouth;
- Fit securely and comfortably against the side of the face;
- Be secured with ties or ear loops;
- Allow for breathing without restriction; and
- Reusable masks must be able to laundered and machine dried without damage or change of shape.

Exceptions for wearing masks include situations that may inhibit an individual from wearing a face-mask safely. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Those with a certain medical or disabling condition;
- Those communicating with a person who has a hearing impairment or other disability;
- Those inside a personal vehicle, alone or with other household members only; and
- Those in specific circumstances, such as receiving medical or dental care.

Cloth masks should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use. When possible, masks should be washed in a washing machine. If a washing machine is unavailable, masks should be washed with soap and water and allow drying fully before using again.

For information on how to make your own masks please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>