



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois FAQ on Updated CDC Guidance

August 19, 2021

On July 27, 2021, the Illinois Department of Public Health (DPH) announced that it fully adopted the updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) masking recommendations to protect against COVID-19 and the Delta variant. CDC recommends that everyone, including fully vaccinated individuals, wear a mask in public indoor setting in areas with substantial and high transmission. Based on the CDC guidance, DPH strongly recommends that all businesses throughout the State require vaccinated and unvaccinated individual wears masks indoors.

How is an area determined to be “substantial” or “high” transmission?

- Areas of substantial transmission are considered by CDC to be those with 50 to 99 cases per 100,000 people over a 7-day period. Areas of high transmission are considered to be those with more than 100 cases per 100,000 people over a 7-day period.

How do I know if an area is “substantial” or “high” transmission?

- The community level of transmission can be found here: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>.

What is a public indoor setting?

- Public indoor settings refer to indoor events, facilities, or premises in which community/persons visit or work. Public indoor settings include but are not limited to businesses, office buildings, entertainment venues, hotel ballrooms, lobby areas, indoor sports complexes, and other places of leisure.

What about tents?

- Tents, including those used for weddings, must have a least 50% of the sides open in order to be considered an outdoor area.

Does this guidance apply to public outdoor settings?

- In general, the CDC does not recommend that people need to wear a mask outdoors.
- In areas with substantial or high transmission of COVID-19, individuals who are NOT fully vaccinated should wear a mask when outdoors if unable to maintain a six-foot physical distance, such as in crowded settings and activities that involve close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.

In areas with “substantial” or “high” transmission, do I have to wear a mask indoors if I’m able to maintain six-foot social distancing?

- CDC recommends that all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks at all times when in a public indoor setting.

What about in a workplace setting in a “substantial” or “high” transmission area?

- All employees regardless of vaccination status should wear a mask while indoors.

Should an employee wear a face covering if occupying an office in which no other person is present?

- An employee does not need to wear a mask when occupying an office or conference room alone.

Should an employee wear a mask while working in a cubicle?

- CDC strongly recommends that employees wear a face covering if physical distancing cannot be maintained between cubicles. If physical distancing can be maintained, an employee working alone in a cubicle does not need to wear a face covering.

What about retail settings in “substantial” or “high” transmission areas?

- All employees and customers, regardless of vaccination status, should wear masks in a retail setting in areas of substantial or high transmission, even if physical distancing can be maintained.

Do manufacturing employees in in a “substantial” or “high” transmission areas need to wear mask?

- CDC strongly recommends that employees in a manufacturing setting wear a face covering if physical distancing cannot be maintained between workstations. If physical distancing can be maintained, an employee working alone in a workstation does not need to wear a face covering.

Can customers sitting inside at bars and restaurants in a “substantial” or “high” transmission areas remove their masks when eating and drinking?

- Yes; customers can remove their masks when eating and drinking, but should wear masks at all other times when inside a restaurant. Tables should be arranged so that seated patrons are a minimum of six feet away from patrons at other tables.

What if an employee has a medical condition that prevents her/him from wearing a mask?

- Employers should abide by the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide a reasonable accommodation, if possible.

What if a customer has a medical condition that prevents her/him from wearing a mask?

- A business should provide a reasonable modification so that the person with the disability can participate in, or benefit from, the programs offered or goods and services that are provided. Modifications include, but are not limited to:

- Allow a person to wear a scarf, loose face covering, or full face shield instead of a face mask;
- Allow customers to order online with curbside pick-up or no contact delivery in a timely manner;
- Allow customers to order by phone with curb-side pick-up or no contact delivery in a timely manner;
- Allow a person to wait in a car for an appointment and enter the building when called or texted;
- Offer appointments by telephone or video calls

Should businesses and venues post signage for patrons and the public?

- Yes. Businesses and venues should post clear signage for patrons and the public instructing them on masking expectations. Signage should be posted at places of ingress and in various locations through the premises, especially those where individuals may congregate.

In addition to wearing masks, what can individuals do to help prevent the spread of COVID-19?

- Individuals should take [extra precautions](#) when around large crowds, especially in an indoor setting. The CDC recommends:
 - Getting vaccinated;
 - Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated areas;
 - Maintaining social distancing; and
 - Monitor your daily health and avoid leaving your home if you experience COVID-19 symptoms.

Can a municipality or business owner still require masks for areas that are “moderate” to “low” transmission?

- Yes. Local jurisdictions and business owners may impose mask requirements that are stricter than the CDC guidance.

Do I have to wear a mask on public transportation?

- All individuals, including those fully vaccinated and in areas of all levels of transmission, are required to wear a mask when:
 - On public transportation and in transportation hubs;
 - In congregate facilities such as correctional facilities and homeless shelters;
 - In healthcare settings; and
 - Where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.