



CITY OF
OAKLAND

November 14, 2022

Based on direction from Mayor Schaaf, effective Monday, November 28, masks will no longer be required for City employees or our visitors inside City facilities.

The City's Masking Mandate, attached, will remain in place until 12:00 am Monday, November 28, at which time it will expire. This decision presumes that there is not a material change in the severity of COVID-19 spread, and that no other critical issues arise in circumstances or the law that would require widespread masking in the workplace.

While masks are almost universally recommended as a prudent and low-impact safety measure against infection in the workplace, as the public appetite for masking diminishes, mandatory masking ordinances, rules, and policies are falling to the wayside.

The decision to transition from a mandate to a strong recommendation is aligned with public health guidelines issued by the [State of California](#) and Alameda County Public Health department which strongly recommend that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, continue to wear masks indoors to protect against exposure or spread of COVID-19 (references below). The CDC published the [findings of a study](#) in February 2022 that shows the use of a mask in indoor settings protects against COVID-19 by lowering the odds of testing positive by as much as 83%.

While no longer mandated, these public health best practices protect our community, particularly our most vulnerable residents, from COVID-19. **Employees are welcome to continue wearing masks indoors and to request members of the public they serve to wear a mask.** We will continue to supply visitors with masks if requested. If you elect not to wear a mask in the workplace, please respect the decision of others to continue masking to protect their health or the health and wellbeing of their family or community.

Note that [City ordinance](#) still requires people entering senior centers and assisted living facilities to show proof of vaccination in order to protect seniors, an age group especially susceptible to the harm of COVID-19.

With the onset of the cold and flu season, and a surge in respiratory viruses, it is imperative for the health of our organization that you **stay home when you're sick**, keep up on your vaccinations and boosters, and wash your hands frequently. More winter wellness tips are offered below.

The City's current COVID-19 rules and policies are available [here](#). You can reach out to Risk Management with any related questions or concerns.

Winter Wellness Tips

The California Department of Public Health offers [Preventative Measures to Stay Healthy this Winter](#), 5 tips to protect yourself and others from severe illness and hospitalization:

1. Get Vaccinated, Boosted (and Treated)

Flu and COVID-19 vaccines continue to be your best defense to limit severe illness and death – and you can get both at the same time. If you test positive for COVID-19, contact your doctor or a [test-to-treat site](#) immediately to seek [treatment](#). Treatments work best when started right after symptoms begin.

2. Stay Home if You're Sick!

It's crucial to stay home if you are feeling ill. Avoid close contact with others to protect them, and take the time you need to heal. This is especially important for respiratory viruses like the flu, RSV and COVID-19, which can lead to more severe illness.

3. Wear a Mask

There is no vaccine for RSV, so wearing a mask can significantly slow the spread and protect babies and young children who do not yet have immunity and are too young to wear a mask themselves. Wearing a mask in indoor public places is a good way to limit the spread of germs.

4. Wash Your Hands

Your mom was right: frequent handwashing, with soap and warm water – for at least 20 seconds, is an easy way to prevent getting sick and spreading germs.

5. Cover Your Cough or Sneeze

Remember to cough or sneeze into your elbow, your arm, or a disposable tissue to help prevent the spread of winter viruses. Just make sure to wash your hands or sanitize and dispose of your tissue after.

VIDEO: [Stay Healthy this Winter: Tips to Protect Yourself and Family](#)

Public Health References

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:](#)

The CDC maintains that “[m]asking is a critical public health tool for preventing spread of COVID-19, and it is important to remember that any mask is better than no mask.” Moreover, the CDC recommends “that you wear the most protective mask you can that fits well and that you will wear consistently . . . [t]o protect yourself and others from COVID-19.”

[California Department of Public Health](#)

In the State of California, masks are required in healthcare settings and long-term care and adult senior care settings. In other settings, masks are recommended for all, and in some cases may be required if community infection levels reach specified levels.

[Cal/OSHA](#)

Cal/OSHA strongly recommends masking indoors. Additionally, masking is required in connection with a workplace “outbreak,” and required for individuals in connection to testing positive or displaying symptoms.

[Alameda County Public Health Department](#)

Alameda County Public Health requires masking in health care settings and in long-term care and adult and senior care families. Additionally, exposed persons, as well as **persons with COVID-19 should wear a mask for at least 10 days after exposure or the end of symptoms.** Finally, indoor masking is required when mandated by businesses, government offices, youth-serving facilities, while in commercial transport (trains, busses, ferries, taxis, rid-share, etc.) other workplace settings, and transportation hubs.