



TO: Department Heads
FROM: Mayor London N. Breed and City Administrator Carmen Chu
RE: Updated COVID-19 Safety Protocol for City Facilities and Operations
DATE: August 2, 2021

With the surge in cases and increase in hospitalizations due to the highly transmissible Delta variant, and due to recent changes in CDC and CDPH recommendations around masking, San Francisco's Health Officer has updated the *Encouraging COVID-19 Vaccine Coverage and Reducing Disease Risks (Safer Return Together)* health order adding an indoor universal masking requirement ([Health Order](#)).

The updated order **requires that all individuals, vaccinated and unvaccinated, wear a mask in indoor public settings at all times** except for the limited circumstances described as part of the Health Order's *Appendix A: Face Covering Requirements*. This means that all individuals entering a City facility are required to wear a well-fitted mask consistent with DPH's mask guidance ([Mask Guidance](#)), though there are some settings like acute care hospitals where an N95, respirator or surgical mask is required under state or local rules.

The purpose of this memo is to provide specific guidance for our facilities and operations related to the updated order. To the extent allowed by state or federal rules requiring face coverings for unvaccinated people, wearing a well-fitted mask is not required in the following situations:

Indoors While Alone. A person does not need to wear a Well-Fitted Mask when they are alone in a City facility or in a completely enclosed space such as an office, and other people are not likely to be in the same space. If another person enters the enclosed space, both people must wear a Well-Fitted Mask for the duration of the interaction. Individuals must wear Well-Fitted Masks whenever they are in semi-enclosed spaces such as cubicles and common areas, such as firehouses, lobbies, and elevators. A Well-Fitted Mask must be worn if the person is in an indoor public space where others are routinely present.

Active Eating and Drinking. People may remove their Well-Fitted Mask while actively eating or drinking. People are urged to be seated at a table or positioned at a stationary counter or place while eating or drinking. While office breakrooms and other eating areas may remain open, the following guidelines must be followed:

- As a condition for employees to remove their masks and eat or drink in breakrooms, the breakroom must use at least one of the three DPH-approved ventilation strategies: 1) all available windows and doors accessible to fresh

outdoor air are kept open as long as air quality and weather conditions permit; 2) fully operational HVAC system; or 3) appropriately sized portable air cleaners in each room.

- Employees should be notified that they are advised against eating indoors in a breakroom or other common area to the greatest extent possible. Where feasible, departments should provide an outdoor area where employees can eat their meals. If employees must eat indoors, encourage employees to eat away from others, including at their own desks or workspaces.
- Departments should stagger and schedule breaks for their employees and the use of break rooms or other similar indoor spaces to avoid crowding and help limit socializing.
- Departments should post the “Take a Break Safely” sign in any break room, cafeteria, or similar indoor space. The sign is available online ([Take a Break Safely](#)).

Motor Vehicles. A person does not need to wear a Well-Fitted Mask when in a City vehicle if alone and the vehicle is not regularly used by other individuals. But a Well-Fitted Mask is required when more than one person is in the vehicle or if the vehicle is regularly used by others. People are strongly encouraged to roll down the vehicle’s windows for ventilation when there is more than one occupant in a vehicle.

Showering, Personal Hygiene, or Sleeping. People may remove their Well-Fitted Mask only while showering or actively engaging in personal hygiene that requires removal of the Well-Fitted Mask, including at a gym or other facility. People may remove their Well-Fitted Mask while sleeping in indoor public settings (e.g., firehouses).

Gyms and Recreational Sports. Participants in indoor recreational sports, gyms, and yoga studios may not remove their Well-Fitted Masks except while actively engaged in water-based sports (swimming, swim lessons, diving, water polo) and other sports where masks create imminent risk to health (e.g., wrestling, judo).

The Real Estate Division will be updating signage at entrances of all City buildings it manages to reflect the new universal masking requirement. Departments can find updated face covering signage online as part of the Outreach Toolkit ([COVID-19 Toolkit](#)).

We know that vaccinating as many people as possible, as soon as possible, is our best defense against COVID-19, the delta variant, and the harm it can do to our communities. We must continue working together to ensure that as many eligible people as possible get vaccinated. For more information on COVID-19 vaccines, visit [Get Vaccinated](#).