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Mayor Janey announces indoor mask mandate for City of Boston

August 20, 2021



Published by:

[Mayor's Office](#)

The City will address the COVID-19 Delta variant through a five-point plan.

Mayor Kim Janey today announced face masks will be required in all indoor public settings in the City of Boston, as part of a Five-Point Plan for the Delta Variant, a more contagious COVID-19 variant that is now the

primary strain of the virus. The public health order, issued by the Boston Public Health Commission, is effective at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, August 27 in the City of Boston. The City is implementing this proactive public health plan to mitigate community transmission of the Delta variant, ahead of the arrival of more than 50,000 college students from across the country and a return to school for more than 50,000 Boston Public Schools students. Most of the 100,000 children who live in the City of Boston are too young to be eligible for vaccination.

“There is nothing more important than Boston’s safe recovery, reopening, and renewal from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic,” said Mayor Janey. “We know that masks work best when everyone wears one. Requiring masks indoors is a proactive public health measure to limit transmission of the Delta variant, boost the public confidence in our businesses and venues, and protect the residents of our city who are too young for vaccination.”

“The Delta variant continues to create an additional challenge to stopping the spread of COVID-19 in our community,” said Rita Nieves, the Interim Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission. “Wearing a mask indoors along with getting more people vaccinated will offer more protection to all our residents, including children under 12 and those who are not able to get vaccinated.”

Through [an order from the Boston Public Health Commission](#), the City of Boston will require all people over age two to wear a mask or face covering:

- Whenever they are indoors on the premises of a business, club, place of assembly or other place that is open to members of the public, including but not limited to retail establishments, restaurants, bars, performance venues, social clubs, event spaces, and municipal buildings.

Face coverings may be removed when actively eating or drinking. Masks must be worn for all other indoor activities, including ordering at a bar or dancing. Masks are also required in gyms. The order does not apply to gatherings in private residences when no compensation is paid, private buildings that are inaccessible to the public, places of worship, private work spaces inaccessible to the public, or performers who maintain six feet of distance from their audience.

Mayor Janey’s new face covering order builds on the City’s ongoing efforts to address the COVID-19 Delta Variant. The Five Point Plan for the Delta Variant includes:

1. Equitable vaccine and booster access
2. Vaccine mandate for city workers
3. New HVAC investments for schools
4. Mask mandate for schools and city buildings
5. New mask mandate in all public spaces

“Boston’s five-point plan for the Delta variant places vaccination and prevention at the center of our COVID-19 response,” said Mayor Janey. “I ask that every resident of Boston do their part to keep our city safe. Get vaccinated, wear your mask, wash your hands, and get tested, especially if you have traveled, are experiencing symptoms, or have been exposed to the virus.”

Boston is one of the most vaccinated large cities in the country, with over 68 percent of residents having at least one shot. In the last two weeks, nearly 8,000 residents got their first dose of the vaccine. By the end of August, all City employees, contractors, and volunteers will be required to verify their vaccination status through a secure centralized digital portal.

Mayor Janey has also committed \$30 million to improve heating, ventilation, and air conditioning in Boston Public School buildings. The wide-ranging HVAC installations and upgrades will be performed throughout the coming school year.

The new mask requirement was welcomed by leaders of the healthcare and arts sectors that have been among the most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I commend the Mayor's decision to protect the safety of our families and neighbors by instituting a mask mandate for indoor public spaces," said Kate Walsh, President and CEO of the Boston Medical Center. "The high risk of infection associated with the Delta variant poses a critical challenge for our communities. We all have a responsibility to do everything we can to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infections while continuing to encourage everyone to get the vaccine, including those 12 and older who will be going back to school soon."

"I want to thank Mayor Janey and the entire City of Boston for taking this step to promote a healthy space for patrons," said Emily Ruddock, Executive Director of MassCreative, the state-level arts advocacy organization. "As we continue to respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we support this indoor mask mandate to ensure that Boston's vibrant arts and culture sector is safe for all to enjoy."

"The City of Boston has come a long way in ensuring that every resident has had access to the critical resources needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including vaccinations and testing. The CDC reports that indoor masking will cut transmission by about 66 percent. I want to thank Mayor Janey for taking this precaution. Keeping Boston's economy strong means continuing to promote best practices for keeping all Bostonians healthy and safe as we continue to battle the pandemic," said Tim Rowe, CEO of Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC).

[Frequently asked questions](#) about the new mask mandate are available on our [reopening in Boston website](#). Restaurant owners with questions specific may contact: licensingboard@boston.gov. If you are in any other sector covered by this mandate, or you have general questions, please call 311 or contact: smallbiz@boston.gov.

Related resources

- [New mask mandate frequently asked questions](#)
- [Mask mandate Public Health Order](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine sites](#)
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