



Wearing Masks in Travel and Public Transportation Settings

Updated May 3, 2022



As a result of a court order, effective immediately and as of April 18, 2022, CDC's January 29, 2021 [Order](#) requiring masks on public transportation conveyances and at transportation hubs is no longer in effect. Therefore, CDC will not enforce the Order. CDC continues to recommend that people wear masks in indoor public transportation settings at this time.

At this time, for people aged 2 years or older—including passengers and workers—CDC recommends properly wearing a well-fitting [mask or respirator](#) over the nose and mouth in indoor areas of public transportation (such as airplanes, trains, buses, ferries) and transportation hubs (such as airports, stations, and seaports). When people properly wear a well-fitting mask or respirator, they protect themselves and those around them, and help keep travel and public transportation safer for everyone. Wearing a well-fitting mask or respirator is most beneficial in crowded or poorly ventilated locations, such as airport jetways. CDC also encourages [operators of public transportation and transportation hubs](#) to support mask wearing by all people, including employees.



This public health recommendation is based on the currently available data, including an understanding of domestic and global epidemiology, circulating variants and their impact on disease severity and vaccine effectiveness, current trends in [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) within the United States, and projections of COVID-19 trends in the coming months.

Along with staying up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines, avoiding crowds, and hand-washing, wearing a well-fitting [mask or respirator](#) is one of multiple prevention steps that people can take to protect themselves and others in travel and transportation settings.

People should also follow any requirements and recommendations of [state, tribal, local, and territorial](#) authorities, authorities at international destinations, and operators of public transportation or transportation hubs.

For more information about safer travel during the pandemic, see [Domestic Travel During COVID-19](#) and [International Travel](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I wear a mask in travel and public transportation settings?

Properly wearing a well-fitting [mask or respirator](#) is recommended for everyone aged 2 years or older when indoors on public transportation and at transportation hubs. It is especially important to wear a mask:

- During times when public transportation or transportation hubs are crowded
- In areas that are poorly ventilated. Examples of poorly ventilated areas include:
 - Small, enclosed spaces, such as airport jetways
 - Public transportation during periods when the ventilation system is off and windows are closed (e.g., when the engine is turned off on an airplane)
 - During international travel and in transportation hubs that serve international travelers
- If you are at [high risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19, or if you live with or have social contact with someone at high risk
- During long-distance domestic travel
- When the [COVID-19 Community Level](#) in the area you are located in is high (applies to US locations only)
- If you came into close contact with someone with COVID-19 and are not recommended to [quarantine](#). Wear a well-fitting [mask or respirator](#) around others, including when traveling or using public transportation, until 10 days from the date of your last close contact.
 - [Do not travel](#) if you are recommended to [quarantine](#).
 - If you have COVID-19, [do not travel](#) until a full 10 days after your [symptoms](#) started or the date your positive test was taken if you had no symptoms.

Why are masks still recommended in travel and public transportation but not in other community settings?

- Using public transportation and being in transportation hubs can involve spending long periods of time in areas that may be crowded or poorly ventilated, increasing chance for exposure to COVID-19.
- People on public transportation may not have the option to avoid being around people who are not wearing masks by disembarking or relocating to another area, such as on an airplane during flight, or on a bus or train while it is in motion.
 - Some people using public transport or working in transportation settings (or someone they live or have social contact with) might have a [weakened immune system or be at increased risk for severe illness](#).
 - Some might not be able to get COVID-19 vaccines, including children younger than 5 years old.
 - Some of these people may have no alternative to public transportation.
- People from countries or US communities with different levels of COVID-19 or circulating variants mix in travel and public transportation settings. These people also depart to many different locations, so an exposure in a transportation hub or on public transportation can lead to spread across the United States and around the world.

What are other ways I can reduce risk in travel and transportation settings?

- Consider traveling during off-peak times when public transportation and hubs are likely to be less crowded.
- Open windows to improve ventilation if you are on a mode of public transportation where this is an option.

K-12 schools and early education settings should follow [guidance for schools](#) according to the [COVID-19 Community Level](#) in their area with respect to mask wearing on buses or vans.

Operators of Conveyances and Transportation Hubs

Operators of conveyances and transportation hubs can take steps to help keep travel and public transportation safer for everyone.

- Support wearing of masks or respirators on conveyances and in transportation hubs for everyone aged 2 years or older, including employees.
 - If an employer allows voluntary use of [filtering facepiece respirators](#), the employer must follow [29 CFR 1910.134\(c\)\(2\)](#)  requirements for voluntary respirator use.
- Improve [ventilation](#).
 - Keep conveyance ventilation systems on when passengers and workers are on board, including during embarkation and disembarkation processes.
 - Open windows on conveyances where feasible.
- Reduce crowding where feasible.
- Promote hand hygiene, such as making hand sanitizer dispensers available and ensuring they are kept filled and working.

Operators of cruise ships participating in [CDC's COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships](#) should continue to follow applicable guidance.