

## CORONAVIRUS

# New York requiring masks indoors unless businesses require vaccine for entry. What to know

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Published 10:04 a.m. ET Dec. 10, 2021 | Updated 10:21 a.m. ET Dec. 10, 2021

Gov. Kathy Hochul on Friday announced masks will be required to be worn in all indoor public places in New York unless businesses or venues implement a vaccine requirement for entry.

The new mask and vaccine mandates come as COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations surge across much of the state, straining the health care system amid staffing shortages.

The new mask requirements extend to both patrons and staff. The measure takes effect Monday and will remain in place until Jan. 15, after which the state will re-evaluate based on current conditions, according to the governor's office.

The mandates aim to curb COVID-19 outbreaks during the holidays when more time is spent indoors shopping, gathering, and visiting holiday-themed destinations, where the virus can spread more easily, Hochul said in a statement.

"As governor, my two top priorities are to protect the health of New Yorkers and to protect the health of our economy," Hochul said, adding the mask mandate should help achieve those goals and curb surging COVID cases.

"We shouldn't have reached the point where we are confronted with a winter surge, especially with the vaccine at our disposal, and I share many New Yorkers' frustration that we are not past this pandemic yet," she said.

"I want to thank the more than 80 percent of New Yorkers who have done the right thing to get fully vaccinated. If others will follow suit, these measures will no longer be necessary."

## What New York's mask and vaccine mandates say

Businesses and venues that implement a proof of vaccination requirement can accept a variety of digital and paper documents, according to the governor's office.

That includes the digital Excelsior Pass available on smartphones, as well as SMART Health Cards issued outside of New York, or a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention vaccination card.

In accordance with CDC's definition of fully vaccinated, full-course vaccination is defined as 14 days past an individual's last vaccination dose in their initial vaccine series.

In other words, 14 days past the second shot of a two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine; or 14 days past the one-shot Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The state also accepts World Health Organization-approved vaccines.

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Businesses and venues that implement a mask requirement must ensure all patrons two years and older wear a mask at all times while indoors, according to the governor's office.

A violation of any provision of this measure is subject to all civil and criminal penalties, including a maximum fine of \$1,000 for each violation. Local health departments are being asked to enforce these requirements.

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