



U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Transportation Security Administration 6595
Springfield Center Drive
Springfield, Virginia 20598

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

Face Masks in all TSA Facilities – Revision 3

Expiration: Guidance Remains in Place Until Amended or Revoked

References:

- Executive Order 13991, *Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing*, January 20, 2021
- Executive Order 13998, *Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel*, January 21, 2021
- CDC Order, *Requirements for Persons to Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs*, February 1, 2021
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidance, updated May 13, 2021
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Deputy Under Secretary for Management (USM) Randolph D. Alles memorandum, May 14, 2021
- Department of Homeland Security Policy Directive, 066-17, Updated Guidance for COVID-19, August 3, 2021
- Executive Order, *Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees*, September 9, 2021
- Safer Federal Workforce Task Force FAQs on Mask Wearing and on Local Conditions, <https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/mask-wearing/> and <https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/local/>

This Revision:

- Implements requirements for the use of additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the TSA workplace for TSA employees who are not fully vaccinated in accordance with President Biden's September 9, 2021 [Executive Order \(EO\), Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees](#).
- Name change to align terminology with other policies.
- Includes additional reference documents.

Definition:

“Fully Vaccinated”: in general, the CDC considers a person fully vaccinated for COVID-19:

- Two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- Two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine

Summary:

The health and safety of TSA employees and the traveling public continues to be of paramount concern for TSA leadership. It remains a top priority of TSA to protect the workforce and ensure comprehensive compliance with Executive Order 13991, CDC requirements and guidance, and applicable DHS directives. All federal employees, whether fully vaccinated or not, are required to wear a face mask pursuant to Executive Order 13991, DHS Directive 066-17, *Updated Guidance for COVID-19*, and other related guidance. This Administrative Directive (AD) provides updated guidance on TSA's mask wearing requirements and other health and safety precautions necessary to minimize the spread of COVID-19 for employees who are not fully vaccinated.

To be consistent with CDC guidance, TSA requires all federal employees, contractors, and visitors to wear a mask inside federal buildings when in areas with high or substantial transmission rates of COVID 19 whether vaccinated or not. Community transmission rates will be [tracked](#) and communicated locally using guidelines determined by CDC and by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. Further all employees continue to be encouraged to wash their hands and use hand sanitizer frequently, maintain six feet of social distance from others, and take advantage of virtual meeting technology where possible.

Each TSA location must also carefully consider mandates in the counties and cities where operations and facilities are located and where our employees live (including commuting patterns) to ensure compliance to the extent such compliance does not conflict with existing federal law or Executive Order requirements.

All employees must stay vigilant and continue to practice good hand hygiene. Each of us has a role to play in keeping the work area safe. Specific operational requirements may be issued subsequent to this AD.

All TSA employees must continue to comply with the CDC's Order of February 1, 2021, and TSA's Security Directives requiring masks on all airport property and other transportation hubs, and while traveling by air, public transportation, passenger railroad, or intercity bus.

New Requirements for Employees Who Are Not Fully Vaccinated:

TSA employees and contractors who are not fully vaccinated, including those with pending requests for medical or religious exemption, must:

- Wear a face shield in addition to a properly worn surgical masks when indoors at all federal facilities and operational locations, including common areas, hallways, cubicles, and conference/team rooms. (Note: fully-vaccinated employees continue to have the option of wearing face shields in addition to surgical masks but are not required to do so).
- Complete appropriate OLC training before using any TSA-provided PPE, including surgical masks and respirators.
- Continue to follow CDC, DHS, and TSA guidance, including all previously provided requirements.

If a TSA employee has a medical condition or disability that prevents them from safely wearing a surgical mask and/or face shield, the employee should file a request for an accommodation from

the mask or face shield requirement with the Reasonable Accommodation Program Office. Surgical masks and face shields will be provided by TSA when available and upon request.

Note: PPE requirements for TSA employees, to include FSD staff, while in screening areas is provided in the COVID-19 SOP and includes requirements for masks and other precautions in areas where screening is being conducted.

Procedures: In addition to the requirements above, when in a room (e.g., conference room, training room, break room, or training lab) with others, individuals who are not fully vaccinated must do the following:

- Wear a surgical mask and face shield that meets the standards issued by TSA and approved by the Occupational Safety, Health, and Environment to ensure proper testing and certification.
- Practice social distancing, staying six feet apart from others.
- Use collaborative meeting technology (Webex, Skype, etc.) when possible for individuals who are not fully vaccinated.

Fully Vaccinated Employees	Not Fully Vaccinated Employees
Masks Required	
While indoors at transportation hubs	While indoors at transportation hubs
While on public transportation (including commercial aircraft, public transportation, passenger railroads, and intercity buses)	While on public transportation (including commercial aircraft, public transportation, passenger railroads, and intercity buses)
While indoors at all federal facilities and federally controlled operational locations, when not alone or unable to socially distance in areas with high or substantial rates of community transmission	While indoors at all federal facilities and federally controlled operational locations even when alone or social distancing
Masks Not Required	
While outdoors at any location or on any public conveyance, such as an open ferry or the top of a double-decker bus	While outdoors at any location or on any public conveyance, such as an open ferry or the top of a double-decker bus
While indoors at all federal facilities and federally controlled operational locations outside of a transportation hub, even when not alone or unable to socially distance in areas with low or moderate rates of community transmission	--
Face Shield Required	
Not applicable	While indoors at transportation hubs
Not applicable	While on public transportation (including commercial aircraft, public transportation, passenger railroads, and intercity buses)
Not applicable	While indoors at all federal facilities and federally controlled operational locations
Face Shield Not Required	

Not applicable	While outdoors at any location or on any public conveyance, such as an open ferry or the top of a double-decker bus
	While alone in their own office cubicle or office, employees must wear a face mask but do not need to wear a face shield

Mask and Face Shield Requirements:

The following are attributes of masks needed to fulfill the requirements of this AD. TSA will update this guidance to conform with any new direction provided by CDC, as appropriate.

- Masks should completely cover the nose and mouth.
- For those that are not fully vaccinated, both surgical masks and full face shields are required.
- Masks should be secured to the head with ties, ear loops, or elastic bands that go behind the head.
- Masks should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
- Masks should be made of a solid piece of material without slits, exhalation valves, or punctures.

For those that are fully vaccinated, the following attributes are additionally acceptable as long as masks meet the requirements above.

- Masks can be either manufactured or homemade. Cloth masks should be made with two or more layers of a breathable fabric that is tightlywoven (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source).
- Masks can be reusable or disposable.
- Masks can have inner filter pockets.
- Clear masks or cloth masks with a clear plastic panel may be used to facilitate communication with people who are hearing impaired or others who need to see a speaker's mouth to understand speech.
- Medical masks and N-95 respirators fulfill the requirements of this AD.

The following do not fulfill the requirements of this AD:

- Masks worn in a way that does not cover both the mouth and nose.
- Scarves, ski masks, balaclavas/ski masks, neck gaiters/warmers or bandanas.
- Shirt or sweater collars (e.g., turtleneck collars) pulled up over the mouth and nose.
- Masks made from loosely woven fabric or that are knitted, i.e., fabrics that let light pass through.
- Masks made from materials that are hard to breathe through (such as vinyl, plastic or leather).
- Masks containing slits, exhalation valves, or punctures.
- Masks that do not fit properly (large gaps, too loose or too tight).

Exceptions:

Masks and face shields (when applicable), even for those who are not fully vaccinated, are not required

in the following circumstances:

- While eating, drinking, or taking oral medications for brief periods. However, prolonged periods of mask removal are not permitted during eating and drinking.
- While communicating with a person who is hearing impaired when the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- For TSA employees, when TSA's Reasonable Accommodation Office has granted the employee's request for accommodation regarding a requirement in this AD.

When in areas of substantial or high rates of community transmission, employees who are fully vaccinated do not have to wear a mask when in an individual office, provided the office is fully enclosed with floor to ceiling walls and the door to the office is closed. If another individual enters the office, even if the door remains open, a mask must be worn until that individual exits the office. Employees who are not fully vaccinated must wear a mask when in an individual office at all times but do not need to wear a face shield.

This directive is effective December 8, 2021 and remains in effect until further notice.

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