



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

## **ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE**

### **Face Masks in all TSA Facilities and Workspaces – Revision 5**

**Expiration:** Guidance Remains in Place Until Amended or Revoked

#### **References:**

- Executive Order 13991, *Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing*, January 20, 2021
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Use and Care of Masks Guidance, updated February 25, 2022
- 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
- Safer Federal Workforce Task Force FAQs on Mask Wearing and on Local Conditions, [saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/mask-wearing/](https://saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/mask-wearing/) and [saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/local/](https://saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/local/)

#### **This Revision:**

Under References, removes reference to Executive Order 13998, *Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel*, as well as the CDC Order, *Requirements for Persons to Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs*, and Security Directives (SDs) 1542-21-01, 1544-21-02 and 1546-21-01, and the associated Personal Protective Equipment requirements.

## 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 guidance, and applicable DHS directives. All federal employees, whether fully vaccinated or not, are required to wear a face mask when required 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.

To be consistent with CDC guidance, TSA requires all federal employees, contractors, and visitors to wear a mask inside federal buildings and TSA workspaces, which includes screening locations, when in areas with high community levels of COVID-19, whether vaccinated or not. Please note that this mask requirement is not applicable to passengers in airport checkpoint or checked baggage locations. Employees, contractors, and visitors are not required to wear a mask inside federal buildings or workspaces in areas with medium or low community levels of COVID-19. Designated local officials must [track](#) the COVID-19 Community Levels by checking weekly on Fridays to determine and communicate locally using CDC and the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidelines. All employees are encouraged to continue washing their hands and using hand sanitizer frequently, maintaining six feet of social distance from others, and taking advantage of virtual meeting technology when possible.

Each TSA location must carefully consider mandates in the counties and cities where TSA operations, workspaces and facilities are located to ensure compliance with the AD, to the extent that such compliance does not conflict with existing federal law.

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.

As stated above, the guidance in this AD remains in effect until amended or revoked.

<b>Federal agency masking protocols based on COVID-19 Community Levels</b>	
When the COVID-19 Community Level is <b>LOW</b> in the county where a Federal facility is located	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mask Wearing:</b> Agencies do not need to require individuals to wear masks in that Federal facility or workspace, regardless of vaccination status.</li></ul>
When the COVID-19 Community Level is <b>MEDIUM</b> in the county where a Federal facility is located	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mask Wearing:</b> Agencies do not need to require individuals to wear masks in that Federal facility or workspace, regardless of vaccination status.</li></ul>
When the COVID-19 Community Level is <b>HIGH</b> in the county where a Federal facility is located	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mask Wearing:</b> Agencies should require individuals to wear masks in that Federal facility or workspace, regardless of vaccination status and consistent with <a href="#">CDC</a> and Task Force guidance on mask-wearing.</li></ul>

If a TSA employee has a medical condition or disability that prevents them from safely wearing a mask, the employee should file a request for an accommodation from the mask requirement with the Reasonable Accommodation Program Office.

## Mask 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.
- 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.
- Masks can be either manufactured or homemade. Cloth masks should be made with two or more layers of a breathable fabric that is tightly woven (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.

Note: Employees whose duties require contact with the public, to include Transportation Security Officers, must wear a TSA-issued surgical mask, or may voluntarily wear an N-95 or a KN-95 respirator, when working in TSA operational workspace in an area with a high COVID-19 Community Level.

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 (e.g, vinyl, plastic or leather).
- Masks containing slits, exhalation valves, or punctures.
- Masks that do not fit properly (e.g., large gaps, too loose or too tight).

### **Exceptions:**

Masks 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 and 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.
- In areas with high COVID-19 Community Levels, employees do not have to wear a mask when alone 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.

This directive is effective April 19, 2022, and remains in effect until further notice.

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