

*UPDATED: August 19, 2022*

## ***Policy Summary: Indoor Masking Requirement Recommendations to Prevent COVID-19 for Businesses, Venue Operators & Event Hosts***

While a universal, countywide indoor masking mandate (for all indoor settings countywide) is not currently implemented by the health officer or the state, San Mateo County Health urges local businesses, venue operators, event hosts, and other organizations to consider requiring patrons to wear masks inside their facilities when [COVID-19 community levels](#) are considered high or medium by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In its [Guidance for the Use of Face Masks](#), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) provides recommendations for business and other organizations that include:

- Providing information to all patrons, guests, and attendees regarding masking recommendations for all persons, regardless of vaccine status.
- Providing information to all patrons, guests, and attendees to consider better fit and filtration for masks. Surgical masks or higher-level respirators (N95s, KN95s, KF94s) with good fit are recommended over cloth masks.
- Requiring all patrons to wear masks, especially when risk in the community may be high or if those being served are at high risk for severe disease or illness.

Wearing a mask indoors reduces COVID-19 risks for individuals, lowering the community spread of COVID-19 and keeping health care and hospital systems manageable. Providing additional protection for the most vulnerable individuals and groups, indoor masking, along with vaccines and other layered protections, also offers a strong defense against long COVID.

Businesses may choose to require wearing masks indoors, in keeping with their safety policies. Indoor masking creates a safer environment for staff, as well as protecting patrons, especially those who may be at higher risk for COVID-19. This is especially important as highly transmissible variants proliferate.

The CDPH's indoor masking recommendations apply to indoor public settings and businesses (retail, restaurants, theaters, family entertainment centers, meetings, state and local government offices serving the public), public transit, and in transportation hubs (airports, bus terminals, train and stations).

San Mateo County Health joins the CDPH in urging all organizations that provide services indoors to consider requiring patrons and participants to wear masks when COVID-19 conditions warrant.