

# State of Illinois Announces Face Coverings Now Required in All State Facilities, Regardless of Vaccination Status

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## Illinois e-News Release

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## State of Illinois Announces Face Coverings Now Required in All State Facilities, Regardless of Vaccination Status

*Announcement Follows Updated CDC Guidance and Comes as Cook County Now Shows Substantial Transmission*

**CHICAGO** - The State of Illinois today announced that face coverings are now required in all State facilities for both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. The announcement comes as data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show the majority of counties across Illinois are experiencing substantial or high COVID-19 transmission, now including Cook County. The state is taking this action as an employer to protect its employees, but more broadly, the CDC and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) continue to recommend everyone, including fully vaccinated individuals, wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas with substantial and high transmission.

The State will continue to evaluate the need for additional mitigations and will not hesitate to put them in place as needed to protect the health of Illinois residents.

"Given that the majority of the state is experiencing substantial or high COVID-19 transmission as measured by the CDC, all State of Illinois facilities will require face coverings – regardless of vaccination status – in line with the CDC's current best guidance for ending this pandemic," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "Vaccines work – but we cannot promise those protections for every single future variant if we allow this virus to spread and mutate unchecked in our communities. With all the misinformation out there, I encourage all eligible Illinoisans who haven't been vaccinated yet to talk to their doctors to alleviate any of their fears. Vaccines are how we put this pandemic behind us for once and for all, but I will continue to evaluate the need for further additional mitigations."

"The safety and well-being of State employees and residents remains top priority for the State and this decision supports our efforts to provide a safe environment for our workforce and the people we serve," **said Janel L. Forde, Director, Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS)**. "Masking up is a step that we all can take to slow the spread of COVID-19 and help ensure that State facilities can continue to operate safely."

The Delta variant continues to increase in Illinois and according to the CDC has caused more than 80% of recent COVID-19 cases and estimates indicate it will likely cause more. Delta spreads more easily than other variants and there is new evidence that a small number of fully vaccinated people who may be infected with Delta may infect others.

"While the vaccines have been proven to be effective against the Delta variant at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death, with this new evidence of breakthrough spread, we are adding another layer of protection for State employees and the people we serve," **said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike**. "Vaccination is still the best protection against both the older and newer variants that cause COVID-19. And until more people get vaccinated and transmission decreases, masking will help protect us all. IDPH continues to monitor all conditions for any additional mitigations as the pandemic changes over time."

State employees, regardless of their vaccination status, must (1) wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth while in a workplace or performing work duties in indoor settings outside of their residence, unless they have a medical condition that prevents them from doing so; and (2) at all times, or as much as reasonably possible, maintain physical distancing of at least six feet from any other person while in a workplace or performing work duties outside of their residence.

Visitors over the age of 2 are required to wear face coverings while inside State offices and facilities unless they are unable to medically tolerate a face covering.

In addition, State facilities will continue to receive regular cleaning services and all employees will be provided with cleaning supplies to disinfect personal workspaces and other high touch horizontal and vertical spaces.

For more information about the latest COVID-19 guidance please visit the State's coronavirus website at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/>.

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