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PRESS RELEASE

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TSA to implement Executive Order regarding face masks at airport security checkpoints and throughout the transportation network

WASHINGTON – The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will implement provisions of President Biden’s Executive Order on Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel by requiring travelers to wear face masks when they are in airports, bus and rail stations, as well as while on passenger aircraft, public transportation, passenger railroads, and over-the-road buses operating on scheduled fixed-routes. TSA’s action will also support the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Emergency Order](#) requiring that individuals wear masks on conveyances and at stations, ports, or similar transportation hubs.

Face masks required.



TSA requires proper wearing of face masks, per federal law. Face masks are to be worn at all times. Failure to comply will result in denial of entry to the screening area, and may result in penalties.



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tsa.gov/coronavirus

Starting on February 2, 2021, TSA will require individuals to wear a mask at TSA airport screening checkpoints and throughout the commercial and public transportation systems. This requirement will remain effective until May 11, 2021.

“TSA will fully comply with the President’s Executive Orders, CDC guidance and the DHS National Emergency determination to ensure healthy and secure travel across all transportation sectors. This will help prevent further spread of COVID-19 and encourage a unified government response,” said Darby LaJoye, Senior Official Performing the Duties of the TSA Administrator. “As we continue to experience impacts from this pandemic, we are committed to this measure as the right thing to do for the TSA workforce, for our industry stakeholders and for passengers.”

The federal face mask requirement extends to the nation’s domestic network of airports; passengers and crewmembers flying aboard airplanes operated by domestic and foreign air carriers with inbound flights to U.S. ports of entry; and surface transportation modes, such as passenger rail, bus systems, and over-the-road bus companies. Passengers without a mask may be denied entry, boarding, or continued transport. Failure to comply with the mask requirement can result in civil penalties.

Whether beginning the security screening process at the airport Travel Document Checker (TDC) or submitting checked baggage for screening, all passengers who appear to be over the age of 2 must properly wear a face mask throughout the security screening process. The officer at the TDC will request

that travelers temporarily lower the mask to verify their identity. Those who approach the TDC without a mask will be asked to wear or obtain one to proceed. Passengers who refuse to wear a mask will not be permitted to enter the secure area of the airport, which includes the terminal and gate area. Depending on the circumstance, those who refuse to wear a mask may be subject to a civil penalty for attempting to circumvent screening requirements, interfering with screening personnel, or a combination of those offenses.

According to the CDC Order, face masks should cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides without gaps. Masks can be either manufactured or homemade and should be a solid piece of material without slits, exhalation valves, or punctures. While medical masks and N-95 respirators fulfill CDC and TSA's requirements, face shields and/or goggles are not an acceptable substitute for the use of a mask; however, they may be used in addition to an acceptable mask.

In developing implementing guidance, TSA collaborated with stakeholders in identifying certain exemptions to the face mask requirement. Exemptions include travelers under the age of 2 years old, those with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask because of the disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and those for whom a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations. Visit [TSA.gov](https://www.tsa.gov) for more [information about face mask requirements](#).

TSA Cares is a helpline that provides airline passengers with disabilities, medical conditions and other special circumstances additional assistance during the airport security screening process. Call them at (855) 787-2227 about 72 hours prior to traveling with any questions about screening policies, procedures and what to expect at the security checkpoint.

All commuters and airline travelers, including persons considering international travel, should first check the [CDC website](#) prior to taking their trip.

Throughout the pandemic, TSA has closely coordinated COVID-19 safeguards with industry stakeholders, federal partners, and local law enforcement. This coordination will continue for swift and consistent implementation of this requirement across the transportation network.

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The Transportation Security Administration was created to strengthen the security of the nation's transportation systems and ensure the freedom of movement for people and commerce. TSA uses an intelligence-based approach and works closely with transportation, law enforcement and intelligence communities to set the standard for excellence in transportation security. For more information about TSA, please visit our website at [tsa.gov](https://www.tsa.gov).