

News Brief

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CDC Order Requires Masks While Traveling Domestically

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued an [order](#) requiring masks for domestic travel, consistent with an [executive order](#) recently signed by President Joe Biden promoting COVID-19 safety in domestic and international travel.

According to the order, individuals must wear masks over the mouth and nose when traveling on aircraft, trains, road vehicles and other means of transport into and within the United States, as well as when at a transportation hub. Per the CDC, transportation hubs include any airport, bus terminal, marina, seaport or other port, subway station, terminal, train station, U.S. port of entry or any other location that provides transportation subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

The order generally puts enforcement of mask-wearing on transportation operators, stating that operators must use “best efforts to ensure that any person on the conveyance wears a mask when boarding, disembarking and for the duration of travel.”

These measures come after public health officials recommended a travel mandate as a coordinated response, aiming to establish consistency in mask-wearing standards and policies, which can vary by local regulations.

Exemptions From Mask Requirements

The order exempts the following groups of people from the mask requirement:

- Children under the age of 2 years
- Individuals who cannot wear a mask or cannot safely wear a mask because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Individuals for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety or job duty as determined by safety guidelines and federal regulations

In addition, the mask requirement does not apply under specific circumstances, including:

- While eating, drinking or taking medication for brief periods
- When communicating with an individual who is hearing impaired and the ability to see the mouth is essential
- When necessary to temporarily remove a mask to verify one’s identity, such as when asked to do so by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

While the order applies to transportation methods within the United States, some means of transportation are excluded, including commercial vehicles with a sole driver and designated U.S. military vehicles.

Next Steps

Employers should review the order to determine how these requirements may impact their workplace, and should continue to monitor COVID-19 guidance from the CDC and local health officials. CoVerica, Inc. will keep you updated on any noteworthy developments.