

Washington Updates COVID-19 Rules After Lifting Mask Mandate

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Washington State has issued several updates to COVID-19 orders and guidance to clarify masking rules following Governor Jay Inslee's announcement that the state-wide mask mandate was lifted effective March 12, 2022.

Most Places Are Now Mask-Free for Everyone

On March 11, 2022, Inslee amended his "Washington Ready" Proclamation ([20-25.19](#)) for greater consistency with the Secretary of Health's new "Face Coverings – Statewide" order ([Order 20-03.8](#)). Both the proclamation and order clarify that masks are required only in healthcare settings (such as hospitals, outpatient facilities, and dental offices), long-term care settings, and correctional facilities. The public is reminded by Washington's [Department of Labor & Industries](#) (LNI) that federal law still requires face coverings on public transportation.

Masking in Special Settings

In special settings where masks generally are still required, workers can remove their masks when:

- Working outdoors;
- They have provided their employer sufficient documentation that they are fully vaccinated (which does not require boosters) and are working indoors in areas not generally accessible to the public when only employees are present;
- Engaging in certain activities, such as sleeping, swimming, bathing, grooming, communicating with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, confirming identity, complying with other laws, or during an emergency.

Certain People Are Also Exempt

Children under the age of five and anyone with certain medical or mental health conditions are exempted from wearing masks in any setting. Additionally, if a healthcare setting or long-term care setting is in a private residence, "people who are not paid to provide health care, long-term care, or personal care services" do not have to wear a face covering.

Other Basic Requirements Continue

LNI has updated its [website](#) to remind employers to continue following various basic requirements, including:

- Isolating or quarantining workers known or suspected of infection with COVID-19;
- Providing handwashing facilities and supplies;
- Regularly cleaning and sanitizing surfaces;
- Educating workers about COVID-19 prevention in the language they understand best;
- Providing written notice of potential exposures to workers (and employers of subcontractors) at the same worksite within one business day of a person testing positive (without revealing their identity);
- Reporting outbreaks involving at least 10 workers at a workplace of at least 50 workers

to LNI within one business day;

- Addressing COVID-19 notification, reporting, and prevention measures in a written Accident Prevention Program or equivalent safety program that is workplace-specific;
- Allowing workers to wear masks and personal protective equipment if they choose to and doing so does not present a safety or security issue.

Jackson Lewis attorneys are closely monitoring updates and changes to legal requirements and guidance and are available to help employers weed through the complexities involved with [state-specific or multistate-compliant plans](#).

If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out to the Jackson Lewis attorney with whom you regularly work, or any member of our [COVID-19 team](#).

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