



ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

Office of Emergency Services
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Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alameda County and City of Berkeley Rescind Face Mask Amendments: Everyone Must Mask in All Indoor Public Settings

Previously, fully vaccinated people were permitted to go unmasked in some limited settings.

ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA – Today, the County of Alameda and the City of Berkeley announced that their Health Officers are rescinding the face mask amendments allowing fully vaccinated people to go unmasked in some limited settings, effective 12:01 am on December 30, 2021. Everyone, regardless of their vaccination status, must mask in all indoor public settings.

This change does not impact [face masking requirements for school](#) and youth settings.

The local daily case rate is 18.7 per 100,000 residents and rising, and Alameda County community transmission is now categorized as “High” on the [CDC’s COVID-19 data tracker](#). The Omicron variant of the virus that causes COVID-19 is highly transmissible and everyone wearing masks in all indoor public settings will help limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect vulnerable residents as we enter a winter surge.

“We have learned that Omicron can spread even among the vaccinated and those who had prior COVID infection,” said Dr. Nicholas Moss, Alameda County Health Officer. “Masks work and are a critical layer of safety for everyone this winter.”

While people who are fully vaccinated can become infected and pass this virus to others, vaccination and boosters greatly reduce the chance of someone going to the hospital or dying because of COVID-19. But rapidly increasing case numbers will cause significant stress on our hospitals, even if only a small percentage of those infected require hospital care.

Vaccination and booster doses together with masking will protect our residents and keep hospitals from being overwhelmed with people who are severely ill due to COVID. Protecting our hospitals’ capacity is a top priority so anyone who needs to go to the hospital for any reason can access care in a timely manner.

“Omicron may be more transmissible, but we have the tools to prevent infection,” said Dr. Moss. “Because even a mild infection in a vaccinated person may be passed on to someone who could become hospitalized, we must take every precaution this winter.”

If you haven’t already done so, get vaccinated and boosted; stay home if positive, symptomatic, or unvaccinated/not boosted and exposed; wear a mask in all indoor settings; get tested if exposed, symptomatic, and before and after gathering and traveling; avoid large or crowded and poorly ventilated settings. You can improve ventilation by opening doors and windows.

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