



TOWN OF LANCASTER

BOARD OF HEALTH

Date: November 24, 2021

Lancaster Board of Health

General Guidance around Gatherings (non-household familial) Indoors and Outdoors

As COVID-19 continues to impact community members from all ages and backgrounds, the Lancaster Board of Health developed this document as a guide when considering event planning during the ongoing pandemic.

The guidelines from the state and federal government are minimum guidelines put in place to protect public health. In the past months, it has become clear that despite access to free vaccinations and several very effective vaccine choices that have been thoroughly tested, we still have both vaccinated persons and unvaccinated persons becoming infected and transmitting this highly contagious and deadly virus. Thankfully, many people who are fully vaccinated will experience a much-reduced COVID infection.

Due to the fact that we are approximately 24 months into this continued global COVID-19 pandemic, the Lancaster Board of Health is suggesting additional precautions when gathering with persons outside your immediate household or other gatherings.

Indoor Recommendations:

Things to consider, who will be gathering: (vaccinated/unvaccinated, immunocompromised, elderly or unable to vaccinate)

Group Size: reduced group sizes are always a sensible precaution to reduce risk of infection

Precautions: Indoor precautions include minimizing time indoors which helps reduce risk of transmission. If the activity involves eating, masking except while eating or drinking. Indoors attempting to increase air circulation, make accommodations for room size and space limitations of indoor activity. Provide options for outdoor options to lessen transmission.

Best Practice: Be clear of your intent to have participants mask at your event. Notify event participants in writing prior to the event that masking will be required for all participants at the event. Have extra masks available on the day of your event in case someone has lost or forgotten their face covering. Frequent hand washing is still an excellent precaution especially prior to consuming any food. In the event that soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer is a suitable alternative.

Outdoor Recommendations:

Things to consider: Intended audience and their health/immunization status.

Group size: Can the event be staged to reduce participants coming all at once, staggered entry times.

Precautions/Recommendations: The CDC recommends that when large numbers of people gather, they follow the guidelines below

Additional information from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/>

Activities, Gatherings & Holidays

Updated Aug. 16, 2021



Stay Safe While Doing Indoor and Outdoor Activities with Others

- If you haven't been vaccinated yet, [find a vaccine](#).
- If you are not fully vaccinated and aged 2 or older, you should wear a mask in indoor public places.
- In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings. In areas with [high numbers of COVID-19 cases](#), consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with [close contact](#) with others who are not fully vaccinated.
- People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken their immune system may not be fully protected even if they are fully vaccinated. They should continue to take all [precautions recommended for unvaccinated people, including wearing a well-fitted mask](#), until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.
- [If you are fully vaccinated](#), to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area [of substantial or high transmission](#).

Current Town Mandate: See * for current complete mandate

Summary: All persons over 2 years of age are required to wear a face covering in public buildings regardless of vaccination status (Effective September 8, 2021, at 7am). This mandate is still in place as of the writing of this document.

As a result, the Board is issuing the following public health mandate, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 111 §§ 31 and 104; to protect the public health and reduce the risk of viral transmission:

Effective September 8, 2021, 7:00 am, it is mandated that all individuals aged two years and older wear facecoverings in all indoor spaces, public or private (open to the public), except where an individual is unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability. This order includes but not limited to the following:

- **Public buildings, schools (public and private), and all childcare facilities**
- **Retail stores**
- **Retail food stores, food establishments, and bars until the customer is seated**
 - Food service establishment customers may only remove face coverings when seated.
- **Fitness centers/health clubs, dance studios, and all recreational facilities**
- **Houses of worship**
- **Personal service establishments: barber shops, hair and nail salons allowing for temporary removal during service**

This mandate applies to all workers, customers, and visitors. The mandate will be reviewed by the Board of Health at each subsequent regular meeting. If no action is taken by the BOH to rescind it, this mandate will remain in effect.

All individuals, regardless of vaccination status, must:

- Wear a face covering or mask that covers your nose and mouth
- Maintain a 6 feet social distance from others who don't live with you
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces
- Wash hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available
- Get tested if you have been exposed to or have symptoms associated with COVID-19

When possible, wear more protective masks, which are now readily available for the general public, such as N95, FFP2, KN95 and KF94 masks, or surgical/examination masks under cloth covering, or a second mask, or a single surgical/examination mask.

Masks remain mandatory for all individuals on public and private transportation systems (including rideshares, livery, taxi, ferries, and buses), in healthcare facilities and in other settings hosting vulnerable populations, such as congregate care settings, as directed by the Governor and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

All entry doors of establishments open to the public must post a notice requiring that face masks must be worn inside the establishment. Establishment staff must supervise and enforce this requirement. If an individual refuses to wear a mask or face covering for non-medical reasons, a business may decline entry to the individual.

The Lancaster Board of Health and authorized agents pursuant to MGL chapter 111, § 30, are authorized to enforce this mandate and if necessary, may do so with the assistance of the Lancaster Police and other designees appointed by the Town Administrator. Violations of this mandate may be punished by a civil fine, if after a verbal education and written warning, of up to \$300 per violation in the manner provided for non-criminal disposition of violations of Board Health Regulations by MGL Chapter 40, § 21D.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccination-data-and-updates>