

Colorado shifts from mask 'requirements' to 'suggestions': Unvaccinated residents asked to wear them

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Fully vaccinated Coloradans are free to go without masks unless the setting or business they are in requires otherwise, Gov. Jared Polis announced in a press conference Friday afternoon.

Masks are still required in schools and child care settings unless the teacher, staff or caregivers are vaccinated, Polis said. The state suggests that unvaccinated people older than 11 should still wear masks when indoors and around others.

"We've really reached a level of immunity where the pandemic isn't over, but where we are safer," Polis said, which is allowing for the state to move from "mask requirements to mask-wearing guidance and suggestions."

The change in mask protocols follows the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [announcement Thursday that fully vaccinated Americans do not need to wear masks or social distance \(/story/news/health/2021/05/13/covid-vaccine-cdc-variant-fda-clots-world-health-organization/5066504001/\)](/story/news/health/2021/05/13/covid-vaccine-cdc-variant-fda-clots-world-health-organization/5066504001/).

More: [Here's where to get a COVID-19 vaccine in Larimer County, including without an appointment \(/story/news/local/2021/02/02/where-to-get-covid-19-vaccine-larimer-colorado/4357514001/\)](/story/news/local/2021/02/02/where-to-get-covid-19-vaccine-larimer-colorado/4357514001/)

<https://www.facebook.com/plugins/video.php?height=314&href=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com>

Through June 1, some settings — including prisons, jails, emergency medical and health care settings and school and child care settings — will still require masks, Polis said.

But if a setting where the mask requirement is still in place chooses, they can allow people willing to show proof of vaccination to not wear a mask. For example, if a school district allows it, a fully vaccinated teacher or student does not have to wear a mask in the classroom.

Despite the change, Coloradans shouldn't ditch their masks completely, Polis said.

He recommended people carry masks with them at all times to be prepared to comply with the "many businesses" that will still require patrons to wear a mask. Businesses and private settings are able to set their own requirements, anything from no mask to mask wearing to proof of vaccination.

"I think there's enough Coloradans with different preferences that the market will support a variety of approaches to caution, just as it has all along," Polis said.

How many Coloradoans are vaccine: [With Colorado mask mandate relaxed, new CDC guidance applies to less than half of Coloradans \(/story/news/2021/05/14/colorado-mask-mandate-vaccination-rate-cdc-guidelines-covid-restrictions/5092626001/\)](https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2021/05/14/colorado-mask-mandate-vaccination-rate-cdc-guidelines-covid-restrictions/5092626001/)

Polis also announced that the state health order requiring masks at indoor gatherings of more than 500 people will be extended to June 1. Events larger than 500 people before June 1 will need to be planned in conjunction with the state health department.

This will be one of the final phases of safety protocols across the state, Polis predicted. He said currently about 56% of the state has received one dose, but based on surveys from across the state, he expects about 75% will get vaccinated, putting the state close to herd immunity.

"We've been talking about that light at the end of the tunnel for so long, and for those of us who are vaccinated, we've reached that light," Polis said, noting that for him and others who are vaccinated, the pandemic "is largely over."

Following the lead of the CDC, state and Larimer County, Fort Collins city officials announced the lifting of the city's mask mandate on Friday, effective Monday.

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