

Outdoor mask mandate issued for most public outdoor settings

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On Aug. 13, Governor Kate Brown and [Oregon Health Authority leaders enacted an indoor masking mandate](#) in response to surging COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

Today, Governor Brown announced a new rule would extend that mask requirement to outside areas.

“The Delta variant is spreading fast and wide, throwing our state into a level of crisis we have not yet seen in the pandemic,” said [Governor Brown in an Aug. 24 press release](#). “Cases and hospitalizations are at a record high. Masks are a quick and simple tool we can immediately deploy to protect ourselves and our families, and quickly help stop further spread of COVID-19.”

Beginning Friday, Aug. 27, masks will be required in most public outdoor settings — regardless of vaccination status — where physical distancing is not possible. You can listen to Governor Brown talk about the new rule [here](#).

While the rule does not apply to outdoor gatherings at private residences, masks are still strongly recommended when individuals from different households cannot maintain physical distance.

“It is much easier for people with the Delta variant, compared to people who were sick last year, to infect others around them,” said State Health Officer Dr. Dean Sidelinger. “This is because they have one thousand times more virus in their nose – which means that those around them are much more likely to get sick because this variant behaves so differently. We are starting to see instances where cases are clustering around events, like outdoor music festivals, that happen outdoors. Wearing masks in crowded settings – even outdoors – will help slow the spread of COVID-19.”

The rule does not apply to:

- Children under 5 years old;
- Individuals who are actively eating, drinking, or sleeping — as well as individuals living outdoors, such as persons experiencing houselessness;
- **Persons playing or practicing competitive sports, or engaged in an activity in which it is not feasible to wear a mask** — such as swimming;
- Individuals delivering a speech or performing — such as with outdoor music or theater;
- Mask requirements for day-to-day operations at K-12 schools are not governed by this rule, and will instead continue to fall under the school mask rule. Outside public events, spectator events and gatherings of the general public on K-12 school grounds will be subject to the rule. Child care and youth programs will continue to follow existing OHA mask guidance.

