

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
MASK REQUIREMENT
SECURITY NOTICE (PART 9)

UPDATED PROCEDURES

EFFECTIVE 11:59PM,
FEBRUARY 1, 2021

Background:

As mandated by Executive Orders requiring protection of the Federal workforce and promoting COVID-19 safety in domestic and international travel, TSA is taking immediate action to require mask-wearing as described below. These actions are consistent with TSA's authorities to protect the safety and security of the transportation system. In addition, the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security has determined that there is a national emergency due to the COVID-19 public health threat to transportation security. This Security Notice will be effective on February 1, 2021 at 11:59 Eastern Time and until further notice.

TSA has directed airports to require that all persons in airports and on airport grounds to wear masks. A similar requirement applies to air carriers and requires masks to be worn by all passengers while embarking or disembarking, while on an aircraft, and in any areas within the airport controlled by air carrier (such as VIP lounges). Masks will also be required for all individuals using public transportation. TSA employees and contractors in airports or on airport grounds must comply with the mask requirements. Employees failing to comply with these requirements may be subject to disciplinary action.

TSA will continue to pay close attention to the evolving COVID-19 public health threat and its impact on the safety and security of the transportation system as necessary to protect our workforce and the travelling public, respond to new variants, and promote public confidence in air travel.

Procedures in this Security Notice, supersede applicable sections of previous Security Notices and the COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), v1.

In locations where masks are required:

1. With the exception of individuals with Special Circumstances listed below, all individuals must wear a mask that:
 - a. Completely covers their nose and mouth
 - b. Is secured to their head with ties or ear loops.
2. A face shield and/or goggles are not an acceptable substitute for the use of a mask, but may be used in addition to one.
3. Masks can be either manufactured or homemade and should be a solid piece of material without slits, exhalation valves, or punctures. Medical masks and N-95 respirators fulfill the requirements of this Order.

The following requirements apply at all TSA screening checkpoints, checked baggage locations, and TSA controlled or dedicated areas, until further notice:

1. If an individual:
 - a. Approaches a TSA designated location without a mask, advise them that one is required.

- b. Does not have a mask, offer one, if supplies allow.
 - c. Declines to wear a mask, advise the individual that Federal law requires wearing a mask to proceed through screening.
 - d. Refuses to wear a mask:
 - 1) Advise them that they must wear a mask to proceed with screening.
 - 2) If the individual still refuses to wear a mask, follow procedures in the *Checkpoint and Specialized Screening SOP* and *Screening Policies for SOPs* for individuals who refuse screening (including notifying a Supervisory Transportation Security Officer (STSO) who will determine if an airport-assigned Law Enforcement Officer and/or TSA Management notification is warranted).
 - 3) As warranted, an individual may be told that they may be subject to Federal penalties for refusing to wear a mask.
2. Officers may require individuals to briefly pull away, or lower, the mask from their face to ensure proper ID verification.

Other Screening Locations:

The requirements in this Security Notice specifically apply to areas designated for TSA operations. As all individuals within the public areas of airports are required to wear masks, anyone being screened by TSA, such as at employee access points or for other Advanced Threat Local Allocation Strategy operations, is subject to the mask requirement under the Security Directive applicable to airports. If someone refuses to wear a mask during screening at these locations, notify the Coordination Center for further coordination with the airport.

Special Circumstances:

1. The following individuals may be permitted to proceed without a mask:
 - a. An individual with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of the disability, for example, individuals who do not know how to remove their masks, cannot remove them on their own, or cannot communicate promptly to ask someone else to remove their mask. This exemption does not apply to individuals for whom mask-wearing may only be difficult.
 - b. If an individual indicates they have a disability that prevents them from wearing a mask, notify a STSO or other individual designated by the Federal Security Director to determine whether the individual may proceed without a mask. The STSO will remove the individual from the queue and make a determination based on the following:
 - 1) Medical documentation by a licensed medical provider of a disability described in subsection (a).
AND, IF AVAILABLE
 - 2) Confirmation that the airline the passenger will board has exempted them.
2. Individuals under the age of two (2) are exempt from wearing a mask.
3. For these individuals with special circumstances:
 - a. Allow the individual to enter the screening location.

- b. Advise the individual that if additional screening is required (such as a pat-down or Explosive Trace Detection of Hands), they may be asked to wear a mask for that period of time. If the individual declines to wear a mask, the Transportation Security Officer must complete the required screening.