TOWN OF BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

STEVEN CONTENTE
Town Administrator

DIRECTIVE

TO: ALL PERSONNEL **DATE JANUARY 3, 2022**
FROM: TOWN ADMINSTRATOR STEVEN CONTENTE
VIA: DEPARTMENT HEADS
SUBJECT: GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 21-116/01-3-22 UPDATE

All Personnel,
As you are aware, Rhode Island's level of community transmission of COVID-19 has continued to increase. Pursuant to the Governors Executive Order 21-116, on Monday January 3, 2022 the Town of Bristol will require face masks for all individuals (employees and members of the public) while inside Town buildings regardless of vaccination status.

The Emergency Order makes exceptions to the facemask requirement that include, when employees are working alone in an office or at a job site, and when speaking at a public event, provided that the speaker is fully vaccinated. See the attached Reopening RI publication dated 12-17-21 for additional information.

Please continue to practice social distancing. Weekly vaccination clinics are available at the Bristol Fire Department. Thank you for your continued cooperation in keeping our departments and services open and safe.

Sincerely,

Steven Contente
Town Administrator

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Indoor Masking and Vaccination Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General Information

How do these public health measures impact my organization and what are we required to do?

For the purposes of these public health measures, there are three categories of organizations, each with its own requirements:

1. Indoor customer/public facing venues with capacity of 250 or more people;
2. Indoor customer/public facing venues with capacity less than 250 people; and
3. Office-based and other public/private employers.

Indoor customer/public facing venues with capacity of 250 or more people

This category includes retailers, restaurants, venues of assembly (e.g., performing arts venues, movie theaters, arenas), entertainment establishments, bars, nightclubs, gyms, fitness centers/studios, funeral homes, houses of worship, hair salons, spas, barbershops, historical establishments, cultural establishments, and catered events with capacity of 250 or more people.

For indoor customer/public facing venues with capacity of 250 or more people, the following requirements apply:

- Masking is required of all individuals (including employees and customers/patrons) indoors;
- Establishments will need to post signage at the entrances of their premises communicating this indoor masking policy; and
- Establishments will need to enforce this indoor masking requirement.

Note that for indoor catered events, capacity is determined by the number of event guests (additional details below).

Indoor customer/public facing venues with capacity of fewer than 250 people

This category includes retailers, restaurants, venues of assembly (e.g., performing arts venues, movie theaters, arenas), entertainment establishments, bars, nightclubs, gyms, fitness centers/studios, funeral homes, houses of worship, hair salons, spas, barbershops, historical establishments, cultural establishments, and catered events with capacity of fewer than 250 people.

For indoor customer/public facing venues with capacity of fewer than 250 people, the following requirements apply:

- Masking is required of all individuals (including employees and customers/patrons) indoors unless they are fully vaccinated. Businesses may choose to implement this requirement through one of the following:
  - An establishment-wide indoor masking requirement;
  - An establishment-wide indoor proof of vaccination requirement;
  - Requiring individuals to either show proof of vaccination or wear masks indoors.
- Establishments will need to post signage at the entrances of their premises communicating the policy they choose.
- Establishments will need to enforce the policy they choose.

Note that for indoor catered events, capacity is determined by the number of event guests (additional details below).

Office-Based Businesses and Other Public/Private Employers

This category includes office-based businesses, manufacturers, construction, and other public/private employers that are not customer/public facing.

For office-based and other public/private employers, the following requirements apply:

- Masking is required of all individuals (including employees and customers/patrons) indoors unless they are fully vaccinated. Businesses may choose to implement this requirement through one of the following:
  - An establishment-wide indoor masking requirement;
  - An establishment-wide indoor proof of vaccination requirement;
  - Requiring individuals to either show proof of vaccination or wear masks indoors.
- Establishments will need to post signage at the entrances of their premises communicating the policy they choose.
- Establishments will need to enforce the policy they choose.

How do I know whether my business or facility has a capacity of 250 or more individuals?

Customer/public-facing establishments (e.g., restaurants, retailers, fitness centers, entertainment establishments, performing arts venues, movie theaters) that are reasonably able to accommodate 250 or more individuals indoors exceeds this 250-person capacity threshold.

For example:

- **Seated Establishments/Venues:** A seated establishment/venue (e.g., a restaurant, movie theater complex, or performing arts venue) with indoor seating for 250 or more individuals exceeds this 250-person capacity threshold;
- **Unseated Establishments/Venues:** An unseated establishment/venue may estimate its total capacity by utilizing the assumption that, for every 60 square feet of space, the capacity is one person. Therefore, facilities of 15,000 square feet or more are presumed to have a 250-person capacity or greater. If an establishment/venue is uncertain how to interpret this point, it may contact the Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation (DBR) for guidance by calling 401-889-5550 or submitting a message here.

- **Indoor Catered Events:** For indoor catered events (e.g., a wedding), capacity is based upon the number of guests attending the event. In this instance, an indoor catered event with 250 or more attendees exceeds the 250-person capacity threshold (additional details on catered events are included below).

If an establishment would like guidance from the State as to whether they exceed the 250-person capacity threshold, they can contact DBR by calling 401-889-5550 or submitting a message here.

Do these measures apply to outdoor settings in addition to indoor settings?

These measures only apply to indoor settings (i.e., these measures do not apply to outdoor settings). However, nothing prevents an organization from establishing a more restrictive policy that also applies to outdoor settings.

When do these requirements go into effect and how long will they last for?

These requirements will go into effect on Monday, December 20, 2021 and will remain in effect for 30 days. At the end of the 30-day period, these measures will expire unless the Governor decides it is prudent to extend this order for a longer period of time.

Are there any individual exemptions that apply to the masking and face covering requirements?

Yes. Exemptions apply for the following:

- Individuals under two years of age;
- Individuals whose health would be damaged by wearing a mask or face cover; or
- Individuals who are developmentally unable to comply, including young children who may not be able to effectively wear a mask or face covering.

Additionally, individuals do not need to wear a mask or face covering when:

- A face covering would impede communication by or with a person who has a hearing impediment;
- Working alone in an office or at a job site, provided if a worker can reasonably expect to interact with or to be approached by customers, co-workers or visitors, the worker must wear a mask or face covering;
- Working in an environment where masking would create a safety hazard;
- Receiving communion, making kiddush or conducting similar religious rituals;
- Speaking to a broadcast, webcast or audience when no person is within six feet of the person speaking;
- Competing in professional or intercollegiate athletic programs, provided the athlete provides proof of vaccination;
- Consuming food or drink;
- Officiating, or participating as a legal party in, a marriage or civil union ceremony;
- Undergoing a medical or dental procedure; or
- Performing live indoors, provided the performer provides proof of vaccination. This provision applies to speaking or presenting at a public event, provided that the speaker/presenter is fully vaccinated. This exemption shall not apply in the K-12 setting.

Can my organization establish a more restrictive policy?

Yes, an organization is allowed to establish a more restrictive policy (e.g., requiring both mask wearing and proof of vaccination for all individuals entering the premises).

Information on Vaccination Status, COVID Testing, and Demonstrating Proof of Vaccination or Testing

What does it mean to be "fully vaccinated?"

According to current CDC standards, individuals 12 years and older are considered fully vaccinated:

- Two weeks after their second dose of a two-dose series (for Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines);
- Two weeks after their single dose of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine; or
- They received another COVID-19 vaccine licensed for use by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or authorized for emergency use by the World Health Organization (WHO).

A full list of WHO vaccines that are authorized for emergency use can be found here.

For individuals ages 11 or younger, "fully vaccinated" means proof of one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized for emergency use or licensed for use by FDA or authorized for emergency use by WHO.

What are booster doses and are they necessary to be considered fully vaccinated?

A booster dose is a dose of a vaccine that is given to someone who is already vaccinated and received protection from that vaccination, but that protection decreased over time. Currently a booster dose is not necessary for someone to be considered fully vaccinated according to CDC. For more information on vaccinations please visit COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs | RI COVID-19 Information Portal.

As an individual, how do I demonstrate proof of vaccination?

Individuals can demonstrate proof of vaccination by showing one of the following: (1) a CDC vaccination card, (2) a printed copy or digital photo of a CDC vaccination card, (3) a digital or printed copy of their vaccination record accessed through the Rhode Island COVID-19 Vaccine Portal (link), (4) a digital record through the 401Health app (expected to be released soon), or (5) SMART Health Cards issued outside of Rhode Island (e.g., New York State's Excelsior Pass and Excelsior Pass Plus).

As a business, how do I verify proof of vaccination?

If an establishment has a policy in place that enables individuals to remove their masks indoors, businesses are required to verify proof of vaccination. Businesses can accept: (1) a CDC vaccination card, (2) a printed copy or digital photo of a CDC vaccination card, (3) a digital or printed copy of their vaccination record accessed through the Rhode Island COVID-19 Vaccine Portal (link), (4) a digital record through the 401 Health app, or (5) SMART Health Cards issued outside of Rhode Island (e.g., New York State's Excelsior Pass and Excelsior Pass Plus). Businesses are required to verify that the individual is fully vaccinated (see section above for additional details on what it means to be "fully vaccinated").

Industry-Specific Information

Can individuals remove their masks when eating and drinking?

Yes, individuals can remove their masks when eating and drinking. This applies across all settings (including but not limited to restaurants, performance arts venues, movie theaters, and entertainment establishments).

Under what circumstances can performers remove their masks?

Performers can remove their masks for indoor performances if all performers are fully vaccinated.

Note that performances taking place in the K-12 setting (e.g., choir, a school performance) must follow the State's regulation requiring masking indoors in schools.

Under what circumstances can athletes remove their masks? Does this apply to high school and youth athletes?

For indoor intercollegiate and professional sports, athletes must wear masks unless they are fully vaccinated. For indoor youth and high school sports, athletes must wear masks regardless of their vaccination status. For all outdoor sports, athletes are not required to wear masks.

How do these public health measures impact indoor catered events?

Indoor catered events (e.g., weddings) fall into two categories: (1) indoor catered events with 250 or more guests and (2) indoor catered events with fewer than 250 guests.

Catered events with 250 or more guests require masking for all individuals regardless of vaccination status.

Catered events with fewer than 250 guests require masking for all individuals unless they are fully vaccinated. Events may choose to implement this requirement through one of the following:

- An event-wide indoor masking requirement;
- An event-wide indoor proof of vaccination requirement;
- Requiring individuals to either show proof of vaccination or wear masks indoors.

Note that the masking exemption for eating and drinking applies to catered events, and there are no restrictions on outdoor catered events.

How do these public health measures impact transportation?

Individuals are still required to follow applicable federal and State rules on wearing masks in transportation settings including transportation hubs like airports and stations and on public transportation like planes, buses, trains, and boats.

Additional Information

How do these public health measures relate to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) for employers with 100 or more employees?

Nothing in this order supersedes or changes an employer's requirements under OSHA's COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing ETS for employers with 100 or more employees. Click here for additional information on OSHA's COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing ETS.

Additional Resources

- Get vaccinated! Find a vaccine clinic and appointment that works for you.
- If you have questions about getting vaccinated or booster doses, please visit the FAQ page.
- Click here for additional information on masking.