

NEWS BRIEF

Provided by: Kinloch Consulting Group, Inc.

CDC Still Recommends Masks on Public Transit Despite Recent Court Order

On Monday, April 18, 2022, a federal judge invalidated the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s national mask-wearing requirement for public transit, airplanes and transportation hubs. As a result, the CDC will no longer enforce the mandate, instead relying on individual transit authorities and airlines to determine their own mask-wearing requirements.

However, despite these developments, the CDC recently issued a [statement](#) regarding COVID-19 travel guidance, reiterating that individuals should still wear masks in indoor public transportation settings and transportation hubs. The CDC based this recommendation on current COVID-19 data and the protective value of masks. Notably, the CDC cited domestic and global epidemiology, circulating variants, current COVID-19 community levels within the United States and COVID-19 projections as reasons behind the recommendation.

What This Means

As it stands, individuals are not required to wear masks while using public transportation. Still, health officials at the CDC recommend that everyone ages 2 and older wear a well-fitting [mask or respirator](#) over their nose and mouth in indoor public transportation settings (i.e., on airplanes and trains) and transportation hubs (i.e., at airports and train stations).

Beyond getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and avoiding crowds, the CDC noted that wearing a mask is one of many prevention steps individuals can take

to protect themselves and others in transportation settings.

Next Steps

At the time of this writing, the largest U.S. airlines have all stated that mask-wearing will now be optional. These companies include Delta Air Lines, American Airlines, United Airlines, Southwest Airlines, Alaska Airlines and JetBlue.

It's also important to note that some localities may still be enforcing mask-wearing requirements despite the overturned federal mask mandate. As a result, individuals traveling to different parts of the country should plan ahead to ensure compliance with their destinations' rules and take care to consider recommendations from health officials.

Beyond this, there is a question of whether or not there will be further updates regarding the mask-wearing requirement for public transit. Notably, while the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) filed notice that it would appeal the ruling, the government has made no effort to reinstate the mandate. The DOJ has until May 31, 2022, to appeal if it wishes to do so.

Kinloch Consulting Group, Inc. will keep you updated with any notable COVID-19 policy changes.

