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## VDH REMINDS VIRGINIANS OF IMPORTANT ROLE OF MASKS TO PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19 – MASKS ARE AN EFFECTIVE AND LEGAL WAY TO HELP PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

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### VDH Reminds Virginians of Important Role of Masks to Protect Against COVID-19


*Masks are an Effective and Legal Way to Help Protect Yourself and Others*

(Richmond, Va.) – The Virginia Department of Health reminds Virginians that while [vaccination](#) is the best defense against COVID-19, masks are also an important tool to protect yourself and others.

Public health officials encourage Virginians to continue to wear masks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and allowed by law. There is no legal barrier to wearing masks to protect oneself and others from the virus, nor should anyone be penalized for doing so. While the [state law](#) prohibits wearing a mask for the purpose of concealing one's identity, it does not prohibit wearing a mask for the purpose of preventing the spread of COVID-19. This is true even now that Virginia is no longer under a statewide declaration of emergency.

COVID-19 spreads more easily indoors than outdoors. The CDC [recommends](#) wearing a mask in indoor public places for anyone aged 2 or older who is not fully vaccinated, and for anyone with a weakened immune system regardless of vaccination status. Although it is not generally necessary to wear masks outside, people who are not fully vaccinated should continue to wear masks in crowded settings, particularly in areas with high numbers of cases.

Masks must be worn by persons aged 5 or older while indoors at a public or private K-12 school, pursuant to an [Order of Public Health Emergency](#)  issued by the State Health Commissioner and in effect from July 1 through July 25, 2021. Federal law requires masks on planes, buses (including school buses), trains, and other forms of public transportation. Even when not required, people who are fully vaccinated should continue to wear masks whenever they would be more comfortable doing so.

Businesses are generally free to adopt their own mask requirements. Employees of some workplaces may still be required by state regulations to wear masks, even if fully vaccinated. For more information, employers should refer to the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry's [Standard](#)  and [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Masks may be especially important now that recent cases of the "Delta variant" (B.1.617.2) have been identified in Virginia. This [variant](#) can spread more easily and might cause more severe illness than others. Although current COVID-19 vaccines appear to be effective against the Delta variant, additional [mitigation measures](#) (such as wearing masks, keeping distance from others, washing hands frequently, and cleaning surfaces) help lower risk even more.