



For Immediate Release:
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Mayor Rescinds City Masking Order Effective March 1st Based on Declining Hospitalizations and Decreasing Positive Cases

Nearly 77% of All Eligible City Residents Have Received a First or Single Dose of the COVID-19 Vaccine

BALTIMORE, MD. (Tuesday, March 1, 2022) — Beginning today, Tuesday, March 1, Baltimore City Mayor Brandon M. Scott will be lifting the City Indoor Masking Order instituted on August 10, 2021. The order will be rescinded as of 6 AM Tuesday, March 1, due to recent data trends indicating a stark decline in COVID-19 hospitalizations and data from the Maryland Department of Health signifying as of February 22, 77% of all city residents (5 years old and up) have received a first or single dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 67.7% are fully vaccinated.

Although the Masking Order will be rescinded, the State of Emergency for Baltimore declared on March 19, 2020, will remain in place. Unvaccinated personnel and those at risk of severe COVID-19 infections – older adults, immunocompromised, and children not yet eligible for vaccination – are strongly encouraged to wear a face mask indoors.

“Baltimore’s COVID-19 infection metrics are just a fraction of what they were a few weeks ago. I want to thank everyone: our businesses, our faith-based institutions, and, most of all, our residents for adhering to the recommendations of our local and national health experts,” **said Mayor Brandon M. Scott.** “We will continue to monitor our COVID-19 metrics and make informed decisions. The health safety of our residents remains my top priority. In order to continue taking the necessary precautions to protect all city residents, especially those who remain vulnerable to COVID, the State of Emergency will remain in effect.”

In addition, the Mayor lifted the mask mandate for all city employees. Employees are strongly encouraged to wear masks indoors, in crowded spaces, and particularly in areas with limited ventilation.

“This is an important milestone in our ongoing efforts to combat this pandemic,” **said Baltimore City Health Department Commissioner Dr. Letita Dzirasa.** “With nearly 77% of all eligible residents within our city vaccinated with at least one dose of the vaccine, we are impacting the spread of COVID and reducing the number of hospitalizations in our community,” she said. “Although we are encouraged by the improvement in our COVID19 metrics, this is in no way an indication that the pandemic is over. Rather, we are entering a new phase of the pandemic,” she said. “It is also not a sign that the public health protocols and measures that we’ve put in place to date are no longer necessary. Masks and vaccines remain important tools in our fight against COVID19.”

In Baltimore City, all public-facing transit workers and passengers must wear masks through March 18, 2022, based on the current Federal TSA mandate. This mandate covers all public transit in Baltimore, including the

Charm City Circulator, Harbor Connector, and all MDOT MTA services: Local Bus, Commuter Bus, Metro, Light rail, and MARC services.

Face masks are still required in all health care facilities and schools. Personnel will continue to wear face masks in those areas until the appropriate authorities provide further guidance.

Residents who are eligible for the initial vaccine series or booster can visit the Baltimore City Health Department's website to learn where to get vaccinated at covax.baltimorecity.gov. In addition, testing continues to be encouraged to identify positive cases and reduce exposure to others. At-home test kits remain available through a partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library. Close to 60,000 test kits have been distributed through the library system to date. Test kits are available at Enoch Pratt Free Library Branches when libraries are open, while supplies are available. Approximate quantities available at each branch can be found at Enoch Pratt's website, www.prattlibrary.org/services/at-home-covid-19-tests.

Additionally, the federal government provides four (4) free test kits per household in the mail. To register for this program, you can go to covidtests.gov or call 1-800-232-0233. The health department continues to test throughout the city. Please visit the BCHD website to see weekly testing locations at coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/testing.

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