

Order Expiration FAQ

Updated May 11, 2021

Why did the Public Health Orders expire?

With a steadily low number of new positive COVID-19 cases, a low number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in Boone County, the rising number of people who have gotten one or both doses of a COVID vaccine, and the ability to case investigate and contact trace, the risk of becoming infected and transmitting COVID-19 has decreased. The decision to allow the Health Orders to expire was based on those data points.

Why are recommendations in place if the Health Orders have expired?

While the Health Orders are expiring, that doesn't mean the pandemic is over. PHHS strongly recommends that individuals, families, and businesses continue to follow CDC guidance related to wearing face masks in public places—particularly indoors, maintaining safe social distances, and avoiding gathering in large groups or crowds. These COVID-19 mitigation efforts will continue to help keep people safe and healthy, especially those who are high-risk.

Who should follow the recommendations?

PHHS strongly recommends that individuals, families, and businesses continue to follow CDC guidance related to wearing face masks in public places—particularly indoors, maintaining social distancing, and avoiding gathering in large groups or crowds. Many local businesses are likely to continue requiring masks and social distancing in their establishments, and PHHS will fully support them. PHHS asks that members of the community respect the decisions of those business owners.

Do I still need to wear a mask if a business tells me to or has signage stating to do so?

Yes. Businesses are no longer required to enforce mask wearing, but if they choose to require masks at their establishment then patrons are expected to respect this request. Businesses have the right to refuse service to any patron who is not following their policies. Patrons and employees are also free to wear a face mask even if it is not required.

Will faculty, staff and students still need to wear face masks at school?

If the school's policy is to require face masks, then masks must be worn at that school.

What do I do if I see somebody else not wearing a mask in a business that requires masks?

With the Health Orders expiring, masks are no longer required in Columbia or Boone County by our Health Department. Wearing a mask is still recommended, but it is that individual's choice or the business's policy. You may alert the business to make them aware of the lack of mask-wearing

What if the restaurant or bar I am at seems too crowded?

With the Health Orders expiring, social distancing and capacity limits are no longer required in Columbia or Boone County. People in our community should still practice social distancing to protect themselves and others, but with the current rates of transmission and number of people who are fully vaccinated this has changed from a requirement to a recommendation.

Where am I still required to wear a mask?

Masks are still required on federal property and public transportation. City and County officials have stated that masking will still be required in their facilities. Masks can also be required by businesses if they choose to do so.

Should I continue to wear a mask in public whether or not I am fully vaccinated?

We encourage everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible in order to protect themselves and others in our community. Additionally, masks are still recommended to be worn in Columbia and Boone County, although no longer required. Vaccination options can be found at CoMo.gov/CovidVaccine.

Are masks required in City and County buildings?

Yes. City and County officials have stated that masking will still be required in their facilities.

I still have questions, who can I contact?

If you would like further guidance regarding COVID safety, please email Coronavirus@CoMo.gov.