

# Philadelphia Reinstates Mask Requirement, Effective April 18

By Allen Smith, J.D.

April 14, 2022

**P**hiladelphia health inspectors will start enforcing the reinstated mask requirement at businesses in the city as of April 18. We've gathered articles on the news from *SHRM Online* and other news outlets.

## Rise in COVID-19 Cases

Confirmed COVID-19 cases have risen more than 50 percent in 10 days, the threshold at which the city's guidelines call for people to wear masks indoors, said Dr. Cheryl Bettigole, the city's health commissioner, when she made the announcement on April 11 about the reinstatement. Health officials think the recent spike has been caused by the highly transmissible BA.2 subvariant of omicron, which has spread quickly through Europe and Asia, and has become dominant in the U.S. recently.

(PBS News Hour (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/philadelphia-reinstates-mask-mandate-in-response-to-newest-covid-19-variant>))

## Start of a COVID Wave?

The rise of omicron subvariant BA.2 has caused recent surges in China, as well as record infections in European countries like Germany and the U.K. "This looks like we may be at the start of a new COVID wave like Europe just saw," Bettigole said. Although hospitalizations remain low, Bettigole said Philadelphia no longer meets the threshold for the "All Clear tier."

(Reuters (<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/omicron-stealth-covid-variant-ba2-now-dominant-globally-2022-03-29/>)) and (FOX 29 (<https://www.fox29.com/news/philadelphia-mask-mandate-health-officials-set-to-decide-on-possible-return-of-indoor-mask-requirement>))

## Growth in Cases in Northeastern Cities

While the national increase in COVID-19 is relatively small so far—about 3 percent over the last two weeks—the growth in cases in Northeastern cities like New York City and Washington, D.C., has been significantly steeper. Some colleges in the Northeast, including Columbia, Georgetown and Johns Hopkins, have reinstated indoor mask requirements.

(*The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/11/us/philadelphia-indoor-mask-mandate.html>))

## Philadelphia Requirement Criticized

The Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association called the Philadelphia health department's reinstated requirement "deflating." Ben Fileccia, senior director of operations for the association, said in a statement, "Restaurant workers have suffered severe backlash when enforcing these rules in the past and, unfortunately, this time will be no different."

(*The Wall Street Journal* (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/philadelphia-to-reinstate-indoor-mask-mandate-11649703481>))

**City's Rationale for Requirement**

"By wearing masks consistently, we can continue to go about our daily lives and continue to take part in the life of our city without contributing to increasing transmission of COVID-19," Bettigole said. "I suspect that this wave will be smaller than the one we saw in January," she stated. "But if we wait to find out and to put our masks back on, we'll have lost our chance to stop the wave."

(CNN (<https://www.cnn.com/2022/04/11/health/mask-mandate-philadelphia-covid-19/>))

## HR DAILY NEWSLETTER

News, trends and analysis, as well as breaking news alerts, to help HR professionals do their jobs better each business day.

Email Address

**CONTACT US ([WWW.SHRM.ORG/ABOUT-SHRM/PAGES/CONTACT-US.ASPX](http://WWW.SHRM.ORG/ABOUT-SHRM/PAGES/CONTACT-US.ASPX)) | 800.283.SHRM  
(7476)**

Feedback

© 2022 SHRM. All Rights Reserved

SHRM provides content as a service to its readers and members. It does not offer legal advice, and cannot guarantee the accuracy or suitability of its content for a particular purpose.

[Disclaimer \(www.shrm.org/about-shrm/Pages/Terms-of-Use.aspx#Disclaimer\)](http://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/Pages/Terms-of-Use.aspx#Disclaimer)