



TSA Security Directive 1582/84-21-01/01A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Question 1: Why is TSA issuing this directive on a public health matter?

Answer: The recent Executive Orders, the national emergency determination by the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the CDC Order recognize TSA's authority to address the COVID-19 public health threat to the transportation system. These actions collectively mandate nationwide measures to ensure the security and safety of the nation's transportation system. These federal mandates represent a "whole of government" approach to addressing security and safety concerns presented by the continued transmission of COVID-19 through the transportation system.

Question 2: What is TSA's response to concerns that the new federal requirement adds confusion to what many have already successfully implemented?

Answer: TSA recognizes the significant efforts of surface transportation owner/operators to require their employees, contractors, and passengers to wear face masks. The federal mask requirement seeks to reinforce those efforts with specific guidance from the CDC and provide national consistency to face mask requirements. If a surface owner/operator or the local government has in place measures that are more protective than the measures in the SD, the owner/operator should follow those more protective measures.

Question 3: To whom does this directive apply in Surface Transportation?

Answer: This directive applies to the following entities:

- Each owner/operator identified in 49 CFR 1582.1(a), which includes:
 - Each passenger railroad carrier.
 - Each public transportation agency.
 - Each operator of a rail transit system that is not operating on track that is part of the general railroad system of transportation, including heavy rail transit, light rail transit, automated guideway, cable car, inclined plane, funicular, and monorail systems.
 - Each tourist, scenic, historic, and excursion rail owner/operator, whether operating on or off the general railroad system of transportation.
- Each owner/operator identified in 49 CFR 1584.1 that provides fixed-route service as defined in 49 CFR 1500.3 which includes:
 - Each owner/operator providing transportation by an over-the-road bus (OTRB).

Question 4: What is the process for requesting an Alternative Measure?

Answer: The owner/operator may request an alternative measure if, in TSA's judgement, "...the overall security of transportation provided by an owner/operator subject to the requirements of 49 CFR part 1580, 1582, or 1584 are not diminished...." The standard for an alternative measure is found in 49 CFR § 1570.117.

An owner/operator wishing to request an alternative measure for an requirement in this SD should notify TSA via email at TSA-Surface@tsa.dhs.gov and submit the proposed alternative



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measures, along with supporting documentation. When reviewing the proposal, TSA will review:

- (1) The risks associated with the type of operation, for example, whether the owner/operator transports hazardous materials or passengers within a high threat urban area, whether the owner/operator transports passengers and the volume of passengers transported, or whether the owner/operator hosts a passenger operation.
- (2) Any relevant threat information.
- (3) Other circumstances concerning potential risk to the public and transportation security.

If needed, TSA may request additional information to evaluate the proposed alternative measure. If TSA finds that the proposed alternative measure is “in the interest of the public and transportation security,” it may grant the request.

Question 5: How is TSA enforcing a mask requirement on buses, trains, and in stations?

Answer: As the federal agency responsible for securing the Nation’s transportation system, TSA will be monitoring the implementation of the SD and will work with surface transportation owner/operators to ensure that all surface transportation employees and contractors wear face masks when in conveyances or in transportation hubs/facilities (indoors) to prevent further spread of COVID-19. For the same reason, the SD requires passengers to wear face masks when in a conveyance or in public areas (indoors) of transportation hubs/facilities controlled by the owner/operator.

Question 6: Do I need to wear a mask if I am outside?

Answer: Consistent with CDC guidance, TSA will not be enforcing the mask mandate in outdoor areas of conveyances or while outdoors at transportation hubs. “Outdoors” refers to any open-air area. Examples of outdoor areas of conveyances are the uncovered top decks of buses and open deck areas of ferries or other vessels. Examples of outdoor areas of transportation hubs include surface parking lots and partially enclosed parking garages, passenger pick-up/drop-off areas, railway platforms, piers, open hangars, and airport runways. While people are no longer required to wear a mask outdoors on conveyances or outdoors at transportation hubs, CDC continues to recommend people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in these areas to protect themselves and others. In areas with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, fully vaccinated people should consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.

Masks must still be worn on a plane, bus, train, or other form of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States.

Question 7: Can I remove my mask during hot and humid weather?



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Question 8: Do I need to wear a mask while in my private office alone?

Answer: No, if you are the only person in an individual office with the door closed, you are not required to wear a mask, provided the office is fully enclosed by four walls and a ceiling. If a second individual enters the individual office, even if the door is open, a mask must be worn until that individual exits the office.

Question 9: Do I still need to wear a mask if I've been vaccinated or if all the individuals in a work area have been vaccinated?

Answer: Masks must continue to be worn inside regardless of vaccination status unless the individual is the only person in an enclosed private office.

Question 10: What would constitute a significant security concern that must be reported?

Answer: An example of a reportable significant security concern would be if an individual's refusal to comply with the mask requirement results in situations where the individual assaults, interferes with, or threatens a transportation worker. Additionally, if the situation disrupts service or requires the intervention of a law enforcement officer, the owner/operator must report the incident to the Transportation Security Operations Center (TSOC) at 1-866-615-5150 or 1-703-563-3240 in accordance with 49 CFR 1570.203.

Question 11: How were regulated parties notified of this security directive?

Answer: TSA issued this security directive to the regulated parties through email communication to security coordinators, surface transportation trade associations, and the Surface Transportation Security Advisory Committee.

Question 12: How long will this directive be in effect?

Answer: The duration of the original directive was 100 days from the effective date, (which expired on May 11, 2021) and was renewed on May 12, 2021.

The duration of the renewal directive was 100 days from the effective date, (with an expiration date of September 13, 2021).



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With this reissuance, the directives expire on January 18, 2022. TSA anticipates that the directives would remain in effect until the Executive Order, the CDC Order, and the national emergency determination are revoked or rescinded. TSA will continue to work with CDC health experts and other US Government agencies to any further actions required prior to the expiration of these reissued directives.

Question 13: Will the facial coverings distributed by FEMA to the transportation industry last year meet the requirements of this directive?

Answer: Yes, the masks distributed by FEMA for transportation industry workers meet the requirements of the security directive.

Question 14: Will there be civil penalties for non-compliance?

Answer: The current TSA fine structure for individuals who violate the SD are below. Based on substantial aggravating or mitigating factors, TSA may also seek a sanction amount that falls outside these ranges. As TSA gains more experience with the nature of violations of the Security Directive, TSA may adjust these recommended sanction amounts.

1st offense – Recommend \$500-\$1000

2nd offense – Recommend \$1000-\$3000

The passenger could also potentially be subjected to additional penalties from other agencies or from TSA if other violations are committed during the incident, such as Interference with Screening.

Question 15: Can passengers wear a gaiter/gaiter-type face covering?

Answer: Yes, but only if the cloth masks is made with two or more layers of a breathable fabric that is tightly woven (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source). If gaiters are worn, they should have two layers of fabric or be folded to make two layers. Mask should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face. Mask should be a solid piece of material without slits, exhalation valves, or punctures. SD-1582/84-21-01 defines the term “mask,” and footnote 4 of the SD contains information about masks and their proper wearing.

Inquiries about the TSA Security Directive can be addressed to TSA-Surface@tsa.dhs.gov

Helpful Links

[Presidential Executive Order \(1/21/2021\) on Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel](#)



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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

[CDC Order: Requirement for Persons to Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs](#)

[TSA Security Directive 1582/84-21-01 - Surface Public Transportation Face Mask Requirements](#)

[CDC Face Mask Requirement on Public Transportation Information](#)

[TSA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information](#)

[USDOT FAQs - Federal Mask Requirement](#)