



Written by [D. Michael DeRidder](#) on October 16, 2024

## California Counties Order Mask Mandates for Winter 2024

A recent [Public Health Department order](#) in Alameda County, California, requires masking for healthcare staff in high-risk settings starting November 1, 2024. Alameda County released a [county public health advisory](#) on September 30, warning “substantial waves” of RSV, flu, and Covid-19 are expected this year, according to a [2024-2025 CDC assessment](#):



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The fall and winter of 2023-2024 saw substantial waves of RSV, flu and COVID-19, and a similar pattern is expected this year. To combat the spread of these viruses to vulnerable patients and residents and minimize the associated risk of severe illness and death, Staff and other workers in specified Health Care Facilities (HCFs) in Alameda County, including the City of Berkeley, are required to wear high-quality, well-fitting masks in patient care areas from November 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025, regardless of vaccination status.

The Alameda County order does not require patients to wear masks, but “strongly” recommends wearing masks:

This Order does not require patients, residents, or visitors to wear masks, although masks are strongly recommended for everyone in all health care settings, including Staff in health care settings not covered by this Order.

Santa Clara County, also in California, also is [mandating masks for Winter 2024](#), and will require patients and visitors to wear masks in healthcare facilities. The mask requirement is in effect throughout the “Designated Winter Respiratory Virus Period,” which starts each year on November 1.

“Designated Winter Respiratory Virus Period” means the period from November 1 to March 31 of each year. In any given year, the Health Officer may adjust the dates of the Designated Winter Respiratory Virus Period based on respiratory virus surveillance data. If the Health Officer changes the dates of the Designated Winter Respiratory Virus Period, the Health Officer will notify Health Care Delivery Facilities through a Health Advisory and a notice



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posted on the County Public Health Department's website  
(<https://publichealth.santaclaracounty.gov>).

The [2023 public health order](#) mandating the use of masks in Santa Clara County remains in effect indefinitely until the county Health Officer changes the order:

Effective Date. This Order is effective at 12:01 a.m. on April 4, 2023. This Order is ongoing and shall continue to be in effect until it is rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Health Officer.



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