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PIN 21-38-ASC
(Supersedes PIN 21-12-ASC in part)
(Supersedes PIN 21-17.2-ASC in part)

TO: ALL ADULT AND SENIOR CARE PROGRAM RESIDENTIAL
LICENSEES

FROM: *Original signed by Kevin Gaines*
KEVIN GAINES
Deputy Director
Community Care Licensing Division

SUBJECT: **UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR THE USE OF FACE MASKS, SURGICAL
MASKS, AND RESPIRATORS RELATED TO CORONAVIRUS DISEASE
2019 (COVID-19)**

Provider Information Notice (PIN) Summary

PIN 21-38-ASC supersedes [PIN 21-12-ASC](#), dated February 10, 2021, and [PIN 21-17.2-ASC](#), dated May 14, 2021, in part and provides updated guidance to Adult and Senior Care (ASC) residential licensees related to face masks, surgical masks, and N95 respirators for facility staff, residents, and visitors.

Important! Guidance in PIN 21-12-ASC related to resident isolation and cohorting, staffing considerations based on the resident's COVID-19 status, and use of personal protective equipment (i.e., eye protection, gowns, and gloves) still applies. The Visitation Waiver in PIN 21-17.2-ASC remains effective and is superseded in part only regarding updated recommendations to masking as provided in this PIN.

Please post/keep this PIN in the facility where residents can easily access it and distribute the PIN Summary for Residents (located at the end of this PIN) to residents and, if applicable, their representatives.

On July 28, 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued [updated face mask guidance](#) with new requirements and recommendations specific to ASC facilities. The updated face mask guidance issued by CDPH supplements the [State Public Health Officer Order of July 26, 2021](#) referenced in [PIN 21-32.1-ASC](#), dated August 11, 2021.

With a significant proportion of Californians throughout the state not yet fully vaccinated, it remains important that people, especially in high-risk congregate care settings, wear a face mask correctly to protect themselves and others. As a reminder, mask wearing is in addition to other key measures such as vaccination, testing, improved ventilation, physical distancing, and respiratory and hand hygiene.

Licensees should continue to follow guidance in all applicable California Department of Social Services (CDSS) [PINs](#) in addition to guidance or instructions from:

- Health care providers;
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#);
- [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#);
- [California Department of Developmental Services \(CDDS\)](#);
- [California Department of Industrial Relations \(DIR/ Cal/OSHA\)](#); and
- [Local health departments](#).

*If there are differing requirements between the most current CDC, CDPH, CDSS, CDDS, Cal/OSHA, and local health department guidance or health orders, **licensees should follow the strictest requirements**. However, there may be times where a licensee will need to contact their Regional Office for assistance in reconciling these differences, especially if the strictest requirements appear to be in conflict with the best interest of residents.*

MASKING REQUIREMENTS FOR ASC RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Consistent with the current CDPH face mask guidance and the State Public Health Officer Order of July 26, 2021, CDSS is updating the masking requirements and recommendations for ASC residential facilities.

ASC Residential Licensees and Facility Staff

All ASC residential facilities must strictly adhere to current [CDPH Masking Guidance](#). To the extent they are already applicable, facilities must also continue to adhere to [Cal/OSHA's standards for Aerosol Transmissible Diseases \(ATD\)](#) pursuant to Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations, which requires respirator use in areas where suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases may be present, and the [Emergency Temporary Standards \(ETS\)](#) that requires all unvaccinated workers be provided a respirator upon request.

Where Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations does not require the use of respirators, facilities shall provide all unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated workers with FDA-cleared [surgical masks](#). These workers are required to wear FDA-cleared surgical masks in indoor settings anywhere they are working with another person.

Masking requirements for N95 respirator use and surgical masks also apply to temporary and contracted facility staff.

Important! People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks or more after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna or vaccine authorized by the World Health Organization), or two weeks or more after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).

All Other Individuals

Masks are **required for all other individuals**, in indoor settings at ASC residential facilities, regardless of vaccination status (and surgical masks or double masking is recommended).

Residents

CDPH clarification specific to residents:

- *Indoors* – Residents are not required to wear a face mask while at the facility, but licensees should encourage residents to wear a face mask (a well-fitting surgical mask or double mask is recommended) in indoor communal settings, regardless of their vaccination status.
- *Outdoors* – Licensees should also encourage unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated residents to wear a face mask (a well-fitting surgical mask or double mask is recommended) when outdoors and around others.

Visitors

Licensees must continue to implement face mask guidance for all visitors in indoor settings at ASC residential facilities as specified below. Licensees should incorporate the new recommendation that visitors now double mask or wear a surgical mask wherever well-fitting face masks are recommended per CDC, CDPH, CDSS, CDDS, Cal/OSHA, and local health department guidance or health orders.

Exemptions to Mask Requirements

The following individuals are exempt from wearing masks at all times:

- Persons younger than two years old. Very young children must not wear a mask because of the risk of suffocation.

- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a mask could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a mask without assistance.
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.

Summary of Masking Guidance

In order to assist licensees in implementing the updated masking guidance, the table below is available as a resource. As a reminder, the requirement that all individuals wear face masks as described in the table is in addition to circumstances when facility staff are required to wear an N95 respirator (see section *ASC Residential Licensees and Facility Staff* related to [Emergency Temporary Standards \(ETS\)](#) and [Cal/OSHA's standards for Aerosol Transmissible Diseases \(ATD\)](#)).

Individual	Unvaccinated or Incompletely Vaccinated	Fully Vaccinated
Licensee/ Staff	<p>Surgical mask is required in indoor settings anywhere where they are working with another person, unless an N95 respirator is required pursuant to Title 8 regulations.</p> <p>Well-fitting face mask is encouraged while outdoors where they are around others.</p>	<p>Well-fitting face mask is required in indoor settings (double mask or surgical mask recommended), unless an N95 respirator is required pursuant to Title 8 regulations.</p> <p>Well-fitting face mask is encouraged while outdoors where they are around others.</p>
Resident	<p>Well-fitting face mask is not required, but encouraged in indoor communal settings and outdoors when around others (double mask or surgical mask recommended).</p>	<p>Well-fitting face mask is not required, but encouraged in indoor communal settings (double mask or surgical mask recommended).</p>

Individual	Unvaccinated or Incompletely Vaccinated	Fully Vaccinated
<p align="center">Visitor</p>	<p>Well-fitting face mask is required upon entry and at all times indoors at the facility (double mask or surgical mask recommended).</p> <p>Well-fitting face mask is encouraged while outdoors where they are around others, including the resident they are visiting.</p>	<p>Well-fitting face mask is required upon entry and at all times within the facility (double mask or surgical mask recommended).</p> <p>Well-fitting face mask is encouraged while outdoors where they are around others, including the resident they are visiting.</p> <p>Note: A fully vaccinated visitor of a fully vaccinated resident can choose to have close physical contact (including touch, such as hugs) while they are alone and in the resident’s room during the visit.</p>

For additional information on types of masks, the most effective masks, and ensuring a well-fitted mask, individuals should refer to [CDPH Get the Most out of Masking](#) and see [CDPH Masking Guidance Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are available online:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - [Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- California Department of Social Services (CDSS)
 - [Community Care Licensing Division homepage](#) (includes all COVID-19 related materials, PINs, and other resources)
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
 - [All COVID-19 Guidance](#)
 - [Find a Testing Location](#)
- [Local health departments](#)

If you have any questions, please contact your local

- [Adult and Senior Care Regional Office.](#)

**Provider Information Notice (PIN) Summary for Residents
PIN 21-38-ASC Updated Guidance for the Use of Face Masks, Surgical Masks, and
Respirators Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has prepared this **PIN Summary for Residents** as a companion to **PIN 21-38-ASC** to inform you of guidance we have provided to your care providers concerning your care.

On July 28, 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued [updated face mask guidance](#) with new requirements and recommendations specific to Adult and Senior Care (ASC) facilities. The updated face mask guidance issued by CDPH supplements the [State Public Health Officer Order of July 26, 2021](#), referenced in [PIN 21-32.1-ASC](#), dated August 11, 2021.

With a significant number of Californians throughout the state not yet fully vaccinated, it remains important that people, especially in high-risk congregate care settings, wear a face mask correctly to protect themselves and others. As a reminder, mask wearing is in addition to other key measures such as vaccination, testing, improved ventilation, physical distancing, and respiratory and hand hygiene.

Important! People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks or more after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna or vaccine authorized by the World Health Organization), or two weeks or more after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).

MASKING REQUIREMENTS FOR ASC RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Summary of Masking Guidance

The table below is available as a resource for the licensee of your facility to implement the updated masking guidance. The table does not include circumstances when facility staff are required to wear an N95 respirator (i.e., when caring for residents under isolation or quarantine) or which individuals are exempt from wearing a mask.

Individual	Unvaccinated or Incompletely Vaccinated	Fully Vaccinated
Licensee/ Staff	Surgical mask is required in indoor settings anywhere where they are working with another person, unless an N95 respirator is required pursuant to Title 8 regulations.	Well-fitting face mask is required in indoor settings (double mask or surgical mask recommended), unless an N95 respirator is required pursuant to Title 8 regulations.

Individual	Unvaccinated or Incompletely Vaccinated	Fully Vaccinated
	Well-fitting face mask is encouraged while outdoors where they are around others.	Well-fitting face mask is encouraged while outdoors where they are around others.
Resident	Well-fitting face mask is not required, but encouraged in indoor communal settings and outdoors when around others (double mask or surgical mask recommended).	Well-fitting face mask is not required, but encouraged in indoor communal settings (double mask or surgical mask recommended).
Visitor	<p>Well-fitting face mask is required upon entry and at all times within the facility (double mask or surgical mask recommended).</p> <p>Well-fitting face mask is encouraged while outdoors where they are around others, including the resident they are visiting.</p>	<p>Well-fitting face mask is required upon entry and at all times within the facility (double mask or surgical mask recommended).</p> <p>Well-fitting face mask is encouraged while outdoors where they are around others, including the resident they are visiting.</p> <p>Note: A fully vaccinated visitor of a fully vaccinated resident can choose to have close physical contact (including touch, such as hugs) while they are alone and in the resident’s room during the visit.</p>

Important! Masking requirements around N95 respirator use and surgical masks also apply to temporary and contracted facility staff.

For additional information on types of masks, the most effective masks, and ensuring a well-fitted mask, individuals should refer to [CDPH Get the Most out of Masking](#) and see [CDPH Masking Guidance Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

Your care providers, the licensee of your facility, and your local Long-Term Care Ombudsman (call 1-800-510-2020) are available to answer your questions.