

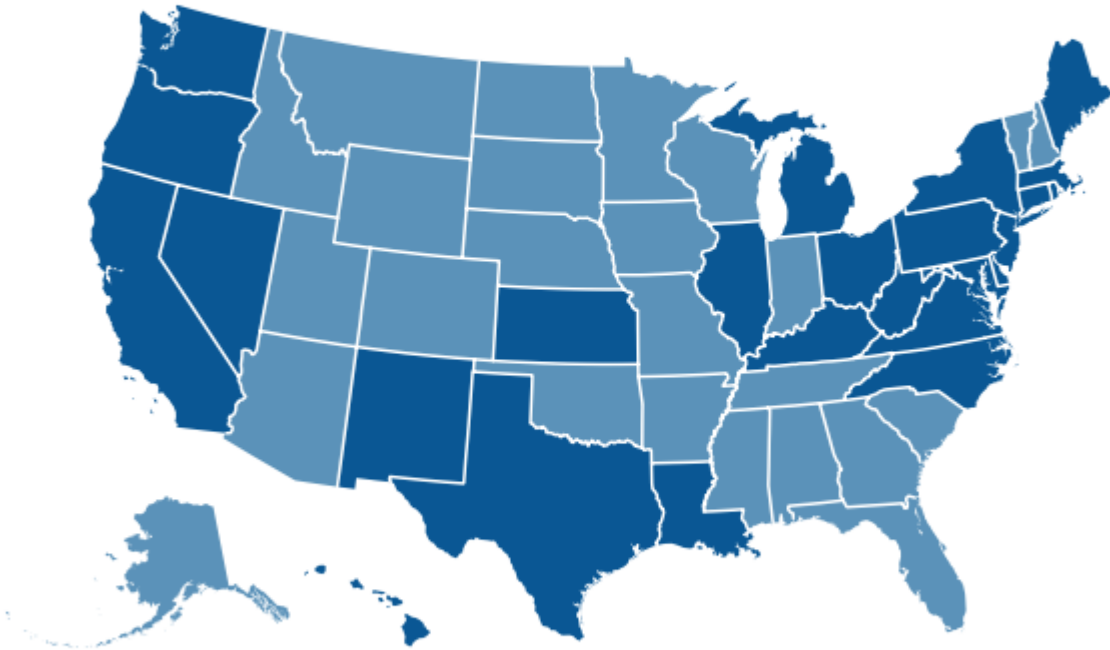
Mask Requirements Across America

A broad consensus has emerged that wearing masks is effective in minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Yet, debate and politicization of mask-wearing continues to threaten the reopening of our economy.

In an attempt to curb the recent spike in cases, some governors have issued orders requiring masks to be worn in public, leading to an inconsistent patchwork of rules across counties and states yet again. This [interactive map](#) from the U.S. Chamber shows how this patchwork undermines consumer confidence and slows the recovery of economic activity.

STATE BY STATE MASK GUIDANCE

Click to see the specific guidance in each state



Recommended

Required

Currently, about half of states require masks to be worn in public settings. In some states, you can face a fine (some up to \$5,000) or imprisonment for not complying. A few states give metric-driven guidance. For example, Texas specifies that in counties with more than 20 coronavirus cases, people need to wear a face covering.

This variance in rules not only makes doing business across states difficult but has led to several other issues for businesses across the country.

One issue is enforcement. While state or local governments are making decisions, the burden of enforcing compliance has unfairly fallen on businesses. Retailers have reported confrontations stemming from customers who refuse to wear masks. However, retail and restaurant workers are not law enforcement officers and often lack the authority and training to handle the level of conflict surrounding mask compliance.

Another issue is an increase in litigation. Businesses are already experiencing a spike in liability lawsuits surrounding masks and other safety measures. Companies are being berated coming and going, with some patrons suing the establishment for trying to enforce mask-wearing, and others for not enforcing it diligently enough. The seriousness of the issue cannot be understated, with some of these lawsuits containing claims of discrimination (from patrons with disabilities), negligence, or even wrongful death.

In our [recent letter](#) to the President and National Governors Association, the Chamber asked that leaders:

1. Establish guidance on the appropriate metrics (e.g., positive tests, hospitalizations) for imposing location-based mandatory mask requirements in all public spaces;
2. Develop model mandatory mask policies that are simple and do not impose the enforcement burden on organizations without such expertise, such as businesses and non-profits; and
3. Make clear that businesses and non-profits will not be held liable for refusing entry or services to an individual who is not complying with face-covering requirements.

A national mask standard, implemented locally, offers the surest way to protect public health and promote economic recovery. View the interactive map on state mask guidance on [Above the Fold](#).

—Jenna Shrove, Policy Research Analyst, U.S. Chamber of Commerce