



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**CITY OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES VACCINE REQUIREMENTS FOR RESTAURANTS,
BARS, GYMS, AND OTHER INDOOR PUBLIC PLACES**

*Informed decision made after closely monitoring COVID-19 public health data,
including recent surge and Omicron variant spread*

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), and the Chicago Department of Business Affairs & Consumer Protection (BACP) announced that any individual 5 years of age or older will be required to show proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to dine indoors, visit gyms, or enjoy entertainment venues where food or drink are being served. This new requirement goes into effect on January 3, 2022 and is in response to an alarming rise in COVID-19 cases both locally and nationally, driven in part by the Omicron variant, and is similar to requirements already in place in other large cities, including New York City and Los Angeles.

"Despite our diligent and equitable vaccine distribution efforts throughout this year, unfortunately, our city continues to see a surge of COVID-19 Delta and now Omicron cases," said Mayor Lightfoot. "New steps must be taken to protect the health and wellbeing of our residents. This public health order requiring proof of vaccination to visit certain indoor public places is a necessary measure to ensure we can continue to enjoy our city's many amenities as we enter the new year."

Patrons age 5 and older must show proof of full vaccination; patrons age 16 and over will also need to provide identification that matches their vaccination record. If any employees of these venues and establishments are not fully vaccinated, the employer must ensure that these employees both continue to mask when interacting with patrons and provide proof of a weekly negative COVID-19 test.

The City of Chicago mask mandate also remains in effect for all public indoor settings. The new order does not affect this mask requirement. The order will remain in effect until the City of Chicago is through this Omicron-driven surge and the risk of overwhelming hospital capacity has passed.



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“This new requirement will not eliminate COVID risk, but it will help ensure a much safer indoor environment for fully vaccinated Chicagoans, as well as for the employees working in these higher-risk settings. As we head further into the winter months, we must take this step now,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “With Omicron, I do expect to see many more COVID reinfections and breakthrough cases, but luckily the vaccines continue to protect very well against severe illness, hospitalization, and death—and even more so when people have also had a booster shot. I remain most worried about the hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans who still have not received a single dose of COVID vaccine nor recovered from COVID infection. I’m worried for their own health, but also for the risk they pose to others’ health and to our hospital capacity—and while we are in this concerning surge, we must limit that risk.”

Chicago was already experiencing a COVID-19 surge thanks to the Delta variant, and as the much more contagious Omicron variant has become dominant over the last week, that surge has dramatically worsened. The city is now averaging more than 1,700 new COVID cases in Chicago residents every day, a 79% increase from one week ago. Chicago’s test positivity rate is now over 7%, up from 4.1% one week ago. More than 60 Chicagoans are being newly hospitalized with COVID each day and an average of 10 Chicagoans are dying from COVID each day. The large majority of Chicago’s COVID hospitalizations and deaths continue to be in people who are not vaccinated. All of these figures are the worst they have been since January 2021, before vaccines were widely available.

Effective Monday, January 3, 2022, the Chicago Vaccine Requirements will apply to the following public indoor places:

- **Indoor Dining:** Establishments where food or beverages are served, including, but not limited to, restaurants, bars, fast food establishments, coffee shops, tasting rooms, cafeterias, food courts, dining areas of grocery stores, breweries, wineries, distilleries, banquet halls, and hotel ballrooms; and
- **Indoor Fitness:** Gyms and fitness venues, including, but not limited to, gyms, recreation facilities, fitness centers, yoga, Pilates, cycling, barre, and dance studios, hotel gyms, boxing and kickboxing gyms, fitness boot camps, and other facilities used for conducting indoor group fitness classes; and
- **Indoor entertainment and recreation venues where food or beverages are served:** Including, but not limited to, movie theaters, music and concert venues, live performance venues, adult entertainment venues, commercial event and party venues, sports arenas, performing arts theaters, bowling alleys, arcades, card rooms, family entertainment centers, play areas, pool and billiard halls, and other recreational game centers.



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The vaccine requirement does not include houses of worship; grocery stores (though indoor dining sections within grocery stores would be included); locations in O'Hare International Airport or Midway International Airport; locations in a residential or office building the use of which is limited to residents, owners, or tenants of that building; or food service establishments providing only charitable food services, such as soup kitchens. Schools and day cares also are not included in the order.

Proof of vaccination means a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card or an official immunization record from the jurisdiction, state, or country where the vaccine was administered or a digital or physical photo of such a card or record, reflecting the person's name, vaccine brand, and date administered.

"Chicago's business community is essential to limiting the spread of COVID-19, including the recent Omicron variant," said BACP Commissioner Ken Meyer. "Chicago's businesses have stepped up repeatedly to protect the health of customers and workers. The vaccine requirement, along with the masking requirement, are our best defense against ending the COVID-19 pandemic."

Establishments will be required to develop and keep a written record describing the protocol for implementing and enforcing the vaccine requirement. Also, establishments will be required to prominently post signage at each publicly accessible entrance to the covered location and at least one location inside the covered location that is conspicuously visible, informing patrons of the vaccination requirement.

The following individuals are exempted from the vaccine requirement:

- Individuals entering an establishment for less than 10 minutes for ordering and carrying out food; delivering goods; or using the bathroom;
- A nonresident performing artist who does not regularly perform or render services in a covered location, or a nonresident individual accompanying such a performing artist, while the performing artist or individual is in a covered location for the purposes of such artist's performance;
- A nonresident professional athlete or a nonresident individual accompanying such professional athlete, who enters a covered location as part of their regular employment for purposes of the professional athlete/sports team competition;
- Individuals who have previously received a medical or religious exemption (e.g. from an employer), provided such patrons show the establishment proof of the medical or religious exemption and a COVID-19 test administered by a medical professional within the last 72 hours prior to entering.



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- An individual 18 years of age or younger who enters a covered location to participate in an activity organized by a school or after-school program offered by any pre-kindergarten through grade twelve public or non-public school; and
- An individual who enters for the purposes of voting in a municipal, state, or federal election; or, pursuant to law, assisting or accompanying a voter or observing such election.

Businesses seeking more information and guidance should visit [Chicago.gov/COVID](https://www.chicago.gov/COVID). The City of Chicago will be holding informational webinars to provide an overview of the vaccine requirement on Wednesday, December 22 at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, December 29 at 11:00 a.m., and Tuesday, January 4 at 2:00 p.m. To register for a webinar, please visit [Chicago.gov/businesseducation](https://www.chicago.gov/businesseducation).

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