



Public Health Brief

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To Mask or Not To Mask – Who Do you Believe?

Good morning. You leave your home in Gardnerville NV and follow your usual routine of stopping at a donut or coffee shop on your way to work. You need to follow the CDC guidelines, since they have been adopted by the state of Nevada. You arrive at your workplace in Alpine County, and now need to follow the standards issued by Cal/OSHA. You must work late and ask your family to meet you for dinner in Markleeville. You are asked to follow the California Department of Public Health requirements. Will you comply with any of this? Unlikely. Will you just do what you want to? Likely. Is there any enforcement for noncompliance with applicable rules? Unlikely. CDC announced new guidance last week. Today California announced that they are sticking with the current state requirements, with a possible relaxation on June 15th. Cal/OSHA is reviewing its standards this week. Confused yet?

So, let's try to make it simple:

- Are you vaccinated? If the answer is no, nothing has changed. There are very few excuses for not wearing a mask whenever you are outside of your household and cannot maintain social distancing. Very clear. If you are asked, will you tell the truth? Will you mask or not when outside of our household? And please explain to me why you have not yet been vaccinated!!
- If you are vaccinated, other than the CDC card issued to you, there is no paper or electronic system to prove that you are. You are on the honor system. Should you mask up? Maybe. Not everyone should take their masks off. It is up to you, and also it depends on which rules apply. All stricter local rules (local, state, business owners such as restaurants and stores) override federal CDC rules. Masking is still required for all on public transportation (planes, trains, etc).



Public Health
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Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120
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District 1: January Riddle, District 2: Ron Hames, District 3: Irvin Jim,
District 4: Terry Woodrow, District 5: David Griffith

Here is where it gets foggy. This is my advice:

- If you are high risk (age, immunocompromised, etc.), yes, you should mask up – vaccinated or not
- If your child is not yet eligible for vaccine, yes, they are required to mask up while at school – nothing has changed. Seek vaccine for all who are 12-17 years of age.
- If you are vaccinated, and choose to wear a mask for any reason, by all means, yes – this is your choice and right to make yourself feel safe and more comfortable.
- If you are vaccinated, not high risk, but around people who are, consider wearing a mask for their protection.
- If you are vaccinated and choose not to wear a mask when out in public, that is your right in Nevada, but not yet in California until an anticipated change on June 15th, when California is expected to adopt the CDC guidance.
- If you are vaccinated, but don't trust or feel comfortable being around others who are not masked, don't put yourself in those situations.

This is all in the context of Alpine County having a very low rate of new cases, and one of the highest vaccination rates in the entire state. The Moderna vaccine which we have been using is very effective and safe. California is getting closer to herd immunity of 70%, which is key to preventing further surges of cases and the development of new variants resistant to vaccines. All good news.

Do you have choices? Absolutely – be honest with yourself. Take your health in your own hands and get vaccinated. Mask up when you are required to or are more comfortable doing so. Avoid situations which may put you at higher risk or where you do not feel comfortable or cannot trust the people who may be around you. And lastly, everyone deserves to be treated with kindness – vaccinated or not, masked or not. We are community – success or failure will be achieved together!

CDC and state of Nevada:

[When You've Been Fully Vaccinated | CDC](#)

California:

[guidance for face coverings \(ca.gov\)](#)

California workplaces:

[COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards - Fact Sheets, Model Written Program and Other Resources \(ca.gov\)](#)



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