

[COLUMBUS, OH] In response to the rise of the delta variant of COVID-19, on Monday, September 13, 2021, Council passed ordinance 2388-2021, directing residents to wear facial coverings or masks in indoor public spaces. The mask mandate is required for both vaccinated and unvaccinated residents.

"The COVID crisis is compounding right now, affecting too many families and children," said Council President Shannon G. Hardin. "Council is taking action to respond responsibly, but we only win against the disease if our businesses and residents do their parts to mask up and get vaccinated."

The ordinance requires residents over the age of three to wear facial coverings in all indoor public spaces. Residents and businesses in violation of the order are subject to a civil citation and fine, enforced by Columbus Public Health. However, law enforcement will be authorized to enforce trespassing laws if a resident refuses to comply with the mandate on the premises.

"COVID-19 is spreading like wildfire here and across the country because of the delta variant and we must do everything we can to protect our community and prevent our hospitals from being overwhelmed," said Health Commissioner Dr. Mysheika Roberts. "People with COVID-19 who never get sick or have mild symptoms can spread it to others, including those who are at high risk of complications. Vaccines and face coverings are the best tools we have to protect health and prevent the spread of disease in our community."

This action replaced the executive order issued by Mayor Andrew J. Ginther. The ordinance goes into effect upon signature by the Mayor and will be enforced by Columbus Public Health.

The returning mandate follows the original COVID-19 mask mandate in ordinance 1643-2020, passed on July 6, 2020, but adds a regular 30-day check-in window for Columbus Public Health to report back to Council on the status of COVID-19 in our community, among other legislative changes.

Columbus Public Health will enforce this requirement and issue warnings and citations for residents and businesses. Residents will receive a warning for the first violation, a \$100 fine for the second violation, and a \$250 fine for each subsequent violation. Businesses will receive a warning for the first violation, a \$500 fine for the second violation and a \$1,000 fine for each subsequent violation.

This mask mandate will remain in effect until Mayor Ginther rescinds his September 10, 2021, emergency proclamation or until further act of Council.

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