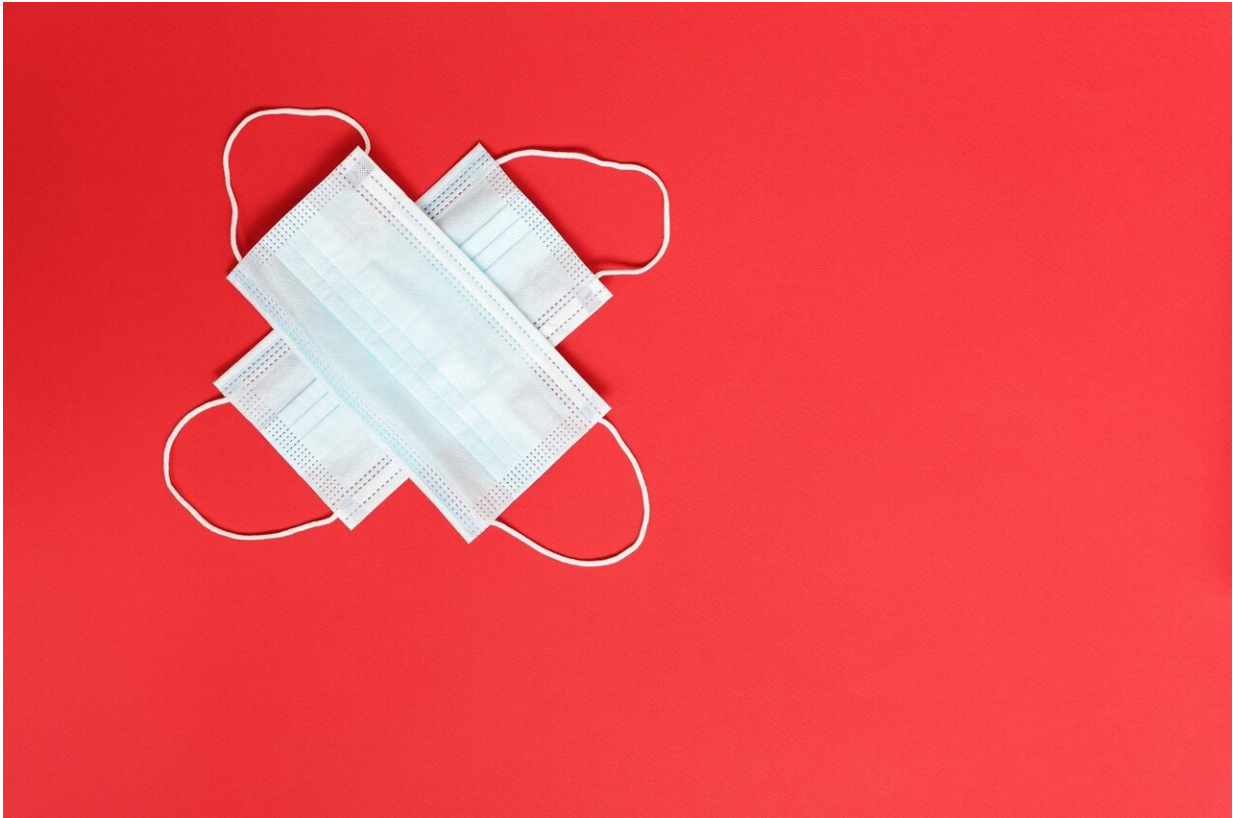


Paris U-turn on masks for cyclists, runners

August 28 2020



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Paris authorities made a last-minute about-turn Friday on a new requirement for universal mask-wearing, exempting cyclists and joggers from the otherwise blanket outdoors obligation.

Outdoor mask-wearing became compulsory in Paris and near suburbs at

08:00 am on Friday as the government moves to stay a trend of mounting [coronavirus](#) infections. Non-compliance is punishable with a fine 135 euros (\$160).

"The wearing of a mask will not be required" for people "exercising cycling or jogging as a [physical activity](#)," the police prefecture said in a statement which came in response to a request by the Paris city council for an exemption.

On Thursday, official data showed 6,111 confirmed new cases in 24 hours countrywide, a record since the end of France's coronavirus lockdown in May.

The Paris region is one of 21 French departments on a map of red zones with active virus circulation.

On Thursday, authorities said the new mask obligation would apply to pedestrians, cyclists and kick-scooter users alike.

"We are pleased with the (prefecture's) decision to allow an exemption from mask-wearing for cyclists in #Paris," deputy mayor Emmanuel Gregoire tweeted Friday.

"On top of the health benefits, cycling is a great way to avoid congestion on public transport."

Gregoire told BFMTV the new police orders also clarified that smoking or eating in [public spaces](#) is not prohibited.

Just hours before the new measure came into force, the Paris city council urged the police prefecture to exclude cyclists "as there as nothing in the science to suggest that it is dangerous" to cycle without a mask.

Gregoire said such a requirement would be counter-productive. "We tell people: 'Take your bike to reduce congestion on public transport' and at the same time we ask them to wear a mask which is particularly uncomfortable," he argued.

The measure did not make sense for runners either, said the deputy mayor, "because anyone who has done jogging in their life knows that it is impossible to do with a mask."

Masks were already compulsory on [public transport](#), in enclosed public spaces, and outdoors in Paris in certain high-congestion areas around tourist sites.

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