

# New Orleans drops mask mandate as coronavirus numbers fall

October 28 2021, by Rebecca Santana

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A float rolls down the street as part of the Krewe of Boo parade on Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021, in New Orleans. Credit: AP Photo/Rebecca Santana

New Orleans is largely ending a mandate requiring residents and visitors wear masks indoors as infections of the highly contagious delta variant of the coronavirus continue to fall, the city's mayor announced Wednesday.

[Mayor LaToya Cantrell said in a news release](#) the mandate will be lifted Friday, with some exceptions: Masks will still be required in [healthcare facilities](#), on public transportation and in K-12 schools.

That comes as the city slowly revives some of the large-scale events that it was known for before the pandemic. On Saturday thousands crowded city streets for the first large parade—Krewe of Boo—since Mardi Gras 2020. The 2020 parades were largely considered fuel for New Orleans becoming an early virus epicenter. Music festivals and parades that normally draw hundreds of thousands of people, including this year's Mardi Gras, were canceled.

But it increasingly looks as if the city will host Mardi Gras parades next year. On Friday, Cantrell said the parades will go ahead if there's no dramatic rise in coronavirus infections.

The city's mask mandate was implemented July 30 as the fourth coronavirus surge packed hospitals. Soon after, Gov. John Bel Edwards implemented a statewide mask mandate.

At the time, Louisiana had the nation's highest per capita COVID-19 infection growth and hospitals were inundated. New hospitalizations have fallen dramatically since, and Louisiana now has one of the nation's lowest rates of new infections.



A crowd gathers as the Krewe of Boo parades in New Orleans Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021. Witches, goblins and masked creatures took to the streets Saturday night in the city's first large, float parade since the pandemic ended such frivolity. Credit: Scott Threlkeld/The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate via AP



The Krewe of Boo parades in New Orleans Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021. Witches, goblins and masked creatures took to the streets Saturday night in the city's first large, float parade since the pandemic ended such frivolity. Credit: Scott Threlkeld/The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate via AP



New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell talks about evacuation plans at City Hall in New Orleans, Friday, Aug. 27, 2021. New Orleans is largely ending a mandate requiring residents and visitors wear masks indoors. The announcement Wednesday, Oct. 27 by Cantrell comes as infections of the highly contagious delta variant of the coronavirus continue to fall. Credit: Max Becherer/The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate via AP, File

The city's announcement comes one day after Edwards largely lifted the statewide mask mandate, [saying the worst of the fourth surge appeared to be over](#).

But another key [city](#) measure requiring people to show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test to enter certain businesses will

remain, the mayor said.

About 60% of New Orleans is fully vaccinated while 75% of those eligible for the shots are fully vaccinated, according to the news release.

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