

New York drops mask requirement on public transportation

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New York City subway passengers wear protective masks due to COVID-19 concerns, Aug. 17, 2020. New York state is dropping its mask requirement on public transportation thanks in part to the availability of new booster shots targeting the most common strain of COVID-19, Gov. Kathy Hochul announced Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/John Minchillo, File

New York state is dropping its mask requirement on public transportation thanks in part to the availability of new booster shots targeting the most common strain of COVID-19, Gov. Kathy Hochul announced Wednesday.

Masks will be encouraged but not required on buses and trains including the New York City subway system, Hochul said.

"We'll be talking about a new normal starting today," the Democratic governor said. "Basically, we're going from mandatory to optional."

Face coverings had been [required on public transportation statewide](#) since April 2020 when New York was first ravaged by the coronavirus. Compliance in the subway system was high early in the pandemic but had dropped steeply in recent months.

"I want to thank everyone who's been complying for 28 months," Hochul said. "It was there for the right reason—it protected health—but now we're in a far better place than we had been."

Masks will still be required in [health](#) care settings including hospitals and nursing homes, Hochul said.



This photo, provided by Office of the Governor of New York, shows New York Gov. Kathy Hochul as she receives a COVID-19 booster shot at the Boriken Neighborhood Health Center, in New York, Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022. Credit: Don Pollard/Office of the Governor of New York via AP



Commuters wear face masks while riding the subway in New York, June 6, 2021. New York state is dropping its mask requirement on public transportation thanks in part to the availability of new booster shots targeting the most common strain of COVID-19, Gov. Kathy Hochul announced Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Ted Shaffrey, File



This photo, provided by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, shows then New York Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul as she rides the subway, in New York, Aug. 4, 2021. New York state is dropping its mask requirement on public transportation thanks in part to the availability of new booster shots targeting the most common strain of COVID-19, Gov. Kathy Hochul announced Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022. Credit: Bryan Lesswing/Office of the Lieutenant Governor via AP, File

Federal officials [approved booster shots last week](#) that target the most prevalent strain of the COVID-19 omicron variant.

Hochul got the booster herself at her news conference in New York City and urged others to follow her example.

"We do believe that we're in a good place right now, especially if New

Yorkers take advantage of these boosters," she said.

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