



# AFA Mask Exemption Policy Update

FEB 7, 2021 MEC AND AIR SAFETY, HEALTH AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

AFA learned on Tuesday, that the Mask Policy was being reviewed to comply with the new TSA Security Directive. Our Safety Committee is working on clarification/additional protection(s) on several items that we have listed below. We have pulled the information on the current policy from the Covid site and have included it in this communication. To be clear, all medical exempt passengers must be cleared before they board our aircraft. If there are no exemptions listed in B2B, there is no medical exemption on your flight. If mid-flight, a passenger removes their mask, the same rules apply with the added protection of the new federal law. FAs should double check B2B for any updates and attempt to gain compliance. If the passenger remains non-compliant, issue a yellow card. If the passenger advises that they have a medical condition, advise the guest that station leadership will meet them upon arrival.

## Open Items:

- Face shield for passengers with medical exemptions (AFA is also requesting extra shields on board).
- Seating the passengers with medical exemptions in the row behind premium class on the E175 and row 8 on the Q to ensure the health and safety of the working crew.
- Ensure there is a process with Medaire, or another third-party provider, to verify the validity of the medical exemption and also verify the Covid negative test results prior to the day of departure.

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*On February 2, 2021, a security directive from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) about the use of face masks will go into effect and become federal law. The impact to our policies is minimal, as we've already been enforcing a mask mandate for months. However, here is what is changing:*

- *Bandanas are no longer acceptable face coverings. Gaiters are still allowed but must have two layers.*

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- Gate and onboard announcements have been updated to include/mention that wearing a face mask is now a federal law, and noncompliance will result in fines and penalties.
  - We will now offer limited medical exemptions for guests with disabilities who are unable to wear a face mask.

Communications about these changes are going out to guests through pre-trip emails and on [alaskaair.com](http://alaskaair.com).

In accordance with the new federal requirements, we will now accept medical exemptions for guests who cannot wear a face mask while traveling in limited circumstances. **Workgroups implementing this new policy will receive further information via bulletin.** **Guests who need an exemption must:**

- Have a medical disability that prevents them from wearing a face mask; and
- Contact Alaska Reservations 5 days before scheduled travel and inform agents of the request for exemption; and
- Provide a letter from a licensed medical provider as to the individual's inability to wear a mask due to a disability; and
- Provide a negative COVID test (PCR molecular test) taken within 3 days of departure. Proof of vaccination is not grounds for exemption.

If an exemption is granted, we will do all possible to seat the guest in a window seat onboard in the last row of the aircraft. They may also purchase seats in rows 2-4 of First Class. The guest must board first and deplane last. We may also move exempted guests to less crowded flights to provide for increased social distancing.

The guest will be required to follow this process for each direction of travel, whether on a round trip or a one-way ticket. For more information, review your workgroup's bulletin when it is disseminated or ask your supervisor.