

Attachment B

ITHACA HOUSING AUTHORITY

Continuity of Operations Plan

COVID-19 Re-Opening/Safety Plan 2020

June 28, 2021 Update

Purpose and Background

The following plan is an update to our previously established Re-Opening Plan as outlined by the recent NYS Executive Orders concerning Masking and Business Capacity Restrictions caused by COVID-19.

As of May 13, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) guidance is that "fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance." (*Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People, or Guidance*)

On May 17, 2021 Governor Cuomo announced New York changes, adopting the CDC recommendations for most business and public settings beginning May 19, 2021.

Effective May 19, 2021 New York State has adopted the CDC's "Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People," issued May 13, 2021 for most businesses and public settings.

The Governor's Announcement said "the State will authorize businesses to continue to require masks for all in their establishments, consistent with the CDC guidance. ... The Department of Health strongly recommends masks in indoor settings where vaccination status of individuals is unknown." It also said that, as previously announced, "most business capacities – which are currently based upon percentage of maximum occupancy – will be removed on May 19. Businesses will only be limited by the space available for patrons or parties of patrons to maintain the required social distance of 6 feet."

Further, in the Announcement:

However, given that the CDC has advised that fully vaccinated individuals do not need to maintain social distance, businesses may eliminate the 6 feet of required social distancing, and therefore increase capacity, only if all patrons within the establishment – or a separate designated unit – present proof of full vaccination status. ... For areas where vaccination status of individuals is unknown and for patrons who do not present proof of full vaccination status, the required social distance of 6 feet still applies.

The Announcement was coupled with Executive Order 202.108, which provides that the State will no longer require, effective May 19, 2021, individuals who are fully vaccinated to cover their noses or mouths with a mask or cloth face-covering while indoors except in certain settings as prescribed in Department of Health guidance, which aligns with guidance published by the CDC.

With this, the "Reopening New York" guidelines limiting the total number of occupants at any given time to no more than 50% of the maximum occupancy for a particular area, are no longer in effect.

To summarize, as of June 30, 2021:

- ❖ Fully vaccinated persons in general do not need to wear masks, inside or outside
- ❖ Individuals who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated must continue to wear masks and maintain physical 6 feet distance when inside.
- ❖ If all persons in an area or room provide proof of full vaccination, no masking or social distancing is required
- ❖ Unless all in the area or room present proof of full vaccination, the 6-foot distancing requirement will apply. Even without a numerical limitation, the area must be configured to maintain the required distance.
- ❖ The method of proof of fully vaccinated status is not prescribed by any of the announcements. A business can elect to use the card provided at the time of vaccination, or the Excelsior Pass, or some other proof. While in some circumstances it seems that a business can utilize the honor system, it does not appear that extends to business capacity. The Announcement calls for "proof."

A business may impose or continue protocols or requirements that are more restrictive and at any time determined necessary by the IHA or local public health officials, the IHA may impose stricter requirements depending on safe health levels.

IHA Action:

Fully Vaccinated People and Masks

This means the IHA can begin to adjust our policy around mask wearing for fully vaccinated staff members.

- Beginning Wednesday, June 30, 2021, any IHA staff member that meets the CDC definition of being fully vaccinated may stop wearing masks while at work. The only exception where a mask is required by a fully vaccinated staff member is if proof of vaccination cannot be provided or another staff member, contractor, or resident requests a mask be worn.
- Upon entering an occupied apartment, IHA staff members must ask the occupants if they would prefer a mask be worn. If the occupant replies yes, Staff will continue to be masked.
- Fully vaccinated staff members may decide to continue wearing a mask when in meetings, entering resident's apartments, meeting with participants, tenants, and vendors or at any time a mask is desired.
- Fully vaccinated staff members intending to stop wearing masks are required to provide proof of full vaccination status in the form of vaccination card or NYS Excelsior Pass. Proof can be provided directly to the Executive Director's Office.
- All IHA staff members have been asked to identify their vaccinations status.
- IHA staff members may discontinue completing and submitting the wellness attestation form weekly.
- Any IHA staff member that cannot provide proof of immunization will be required to continue wearing masks or maintaining social distance in all situations including, but not limited to more than one staff member in a vehicle at once, in meetings, entering any IHA building and occupied apartments, and where 6-foot social distancing is not possible; or as required per IHA policy and guidelines.
- IHA Staff shall continue with in-office new Leasing procedures / orientations. Staff may request proof of vaccination from applicants/tenants before individuals can go mask free.
- All HQS Section 8 inspections and Property inspections will continue. Vaccinated IHA staff members must ask the occupants if they would prefer a mask be worn. Un-vaccinated staff must continue to wear a mask.
- Terminations for program and lease violations will continue, to the extent that NYS or Federal eviction moratoriums allow.
- Non-payment evictions will resume, to the extent that NYS or Federal eviction moratoriums allow.
- Grievance hearings will continue in-person, by Zoom, by telephone or by Hybrid.
- Resume group Section 8 Briefings or conduct individually (by appointment only) by phone, by mail or in-person to the extent of posted room capacity rules. In general, it makes good sense for IHA Staff to mask up during group sessions when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Continue all Interim Re-certifications by mail or drop box, with high priority given to income reductions – Allow for in-person interviews where necessary.
- Computer/Activity rooms and common spaces will begin opening for use effective July 8. Room Occupancy postings will reflect any changes to the approved limit.
- Coordinators /sponsors of Community Room activities will be asked to monitor their events, complying with the CDC guidelines. See Special Notice - Use of Community Rooms and Tenant Activity Rooms.

- Coordinators /sponsors of IHA Meeting Rooms activities will be asked to monitor their events, complying with the CDC guidelines. See Special Notice - Use of Meeting Rooms.

Again, in general, when meeting with Tenants, Section 8 Participants, Landlords, applicants, and the public, and we cannot determine vaccination of all, staff shall continue social distancing and/or continue to wear masks.

The Occupancy Department should use this document and disseminate the information contained herein to the tenants of each development and to Section 8 Participants.

All IHA implemented guidelines are subject to change.

Finally, as a reminder, if you are experiencing any COVID-related symptoms, please notify your supervisor immediately and remain at home until you have a negative test or have quarantined based on the requirements.

SPECIAL NOTICE

COVID-19 Update

Use of Community Rooms & Tenant Activity Rooms

Effective May 19, 2021 New York State has adopted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) "Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People," issued May 13, 2021 for most businesses and public settings.

The Announcement was coupled with Executive Order 202.108, which provides that the State will no longer require, effective May 19, 2021, individuals who are fully vaccinated to cover their noses or mouths with a mask or cloth face-covering while indoors except in certain settings as prescribed in Department of Health guidance, which aligns with guidance published by the CDC.

With this, the "Reopening New York" guidelines limiting the total number of occupants at any given time to no more than 50% of the maximum occupancy for a particular area, are no longer in effect. Public spaces may now go back to full capacity.

To summarize, as of July 6, 2021:

- ❖ Fully vaccinated persons in general do not need to wear masks, inside or outside
- ❖ Individuals who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated must continue to wear masks and maintain physical 6 feet distance when inside.
- ❖ If all persons in an area or room provide proof of full vaccination, no masking or social distancing is required
- ❖ Unless all in the area or room present proof of full vaccination, the 6-foot distancing requirement will apply. Even without a numerical limitation, the area must be configured to maintain the required distance.
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This means that Coordinators /Sponsors of IHA Community and Activity Rooms activities will ensure compliance with the CDC guidelines at their own events.

Again, in general, when meeting with Residents, Section 8 participants, Landlords, applicants, and the public, and we cannot determine vaccination of all, staff shall continue social distancing and continue the wearing of masks by those not fully vaccinated.

A business may impose or continue protocols or requirements that are more restrictive. At any time determined necessary by the IHA or local public health officials, the IHA may impose stricter requirements depending on safe health levels.

By Order of the Ithaca Housing Authority
Brenda C. Westfall, Executive Director

SPECIAL NOTICE

COVID-19 Update

Use of Meeting Rooms

Effective May 19, 2021 New York State has adopted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) "Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People," issued May 13, 2021 for most businesses and public settings.

The Announcement was coupled with Executive Order 202.108, which provides that the State will no longer require, effective May 19, 2021, individuals who are fully vaccinated to cover their noses or mouths with a mask or cloth face-covering while indoors except in certain settings as prescribed in Department of Health guidance, which aligns with guidance published by the CDC.

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This means that Coordinators /Sponsors of IHA Meeting Rooms activities will ensure compliance with the CDC guidelines at their own events.

Again, in general, when meeting with Residents, Section 8 participants, Landlords, applicants, and the public, and we cannot determine vaccination of all, staff shall continue social distancing and continue the wearing of masks by those not fully vaccinated.

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