



Handling a Customer Refusing to Follow Your Mask Policy

Make Your Policy Visible

To prevent the possibility of an unpleasant interaction, make your policy very visible to your customers. This means posting it on your website, hanging signage at your entrance, advising customers when they are making a reservation, and promoting your policy on social media. If customers are aware beforehand about your policy, there is less likelihood of a complaint once they arrive. After arrival, make sure your staff reminds customers of the need to wear masks when they are getting up from their table or going to the restroom. You can find a printable poster that covers state signage requirements, please [click here](#).

Train Staff on Your Expectations

Communicating with your employees what the safety protocols you are putting into place, including requiring customers to wear masks in particular instances and how you would like them to explain those protocols to customers, is crucial. Employees should be coached on exactly how you would like them to react if a customer is not following the policy. Whether it be a polite reminder or requesting a manager's assistance, staff should be comfortable in what is expected of them when handling these interactions with customers.

Handling a Customer Who Refuses to Comply

If a customer refuses to comply with your policy after a staff member has politely requested them to, a manager should be involved. Managers should go into these situations delicately, but aware of what needs to be done if a customer becomes belligerent. When managing this situation, the best steps for your manager to take are:

- Privately and politely inform the customer of the mask policy. If needed, explain current state guidance that requires these safety measures in your establishment.
- Offer to reschedule a reservation, or if available, provide the customer a mask.

- If a visitor still refuses, request that they leave until they can comply with the mask policy or until masks are no longer necessary.
- If a customer becomes belligerent or threatening, call security or local authorities immediately.
- Regardless of whether the customer chooses to leave or comply, the manager should document (objectively and in detail) the incident to keep in your records. Be sure to retain those reports in case they are later needed.

Medical Exemptions and Accommodations

Some customers may claim a medical exemption to your face mask policy. In New Hampshire, there is no medical exemption, but this situation still needs to be handled with the utmost care and consideration. When training your management team about how to respond to customers seeking exemption from your policy, be sure they are aware of the following:

- Do not engage with the customer about their disability. This means not asking them to disclose their personal medical history or asking for proof of medical diagnosis.
- Offer reasonable accommodations for your services. For example, a restaurant may offer curbside pick-up to a customer who would like to dine with them but cannot wear a mask.
- CDC states children under two years of age should not be wearing a mask.
- The ADA is not issuing mask exception cards or posters, [click here](#) for more information.
- Protests due to political beliefs or due to the customer's personal anti-mask stance are not permitted exceptions.

