



Biden's executive actions to tackle Covid-19

January 26, 2021

In his first days in office, President Joe Biden has signed a series of executive actions as part of his plan to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Among these are a mandate requiring masks on interstate transportation — including planes and trains — and the creation of a Covid-19 Health Equity Task Force charged with addressing racial disparities in testing and treatment efforts. While all presidential actions, like memorandums and directives, guide government officials and agencies, executive orders and proclamations need to be published in the Federal Register.

COVID-19	DESCRIPTION/Additional context	TYPE OF ACTION
Create Covid-19 response team Reversal of Trump order	A White House Covid-19 response team led by incoming pandemic response coordinator Jeff Zients will coordinate vaccine rollouts, schools reopenings and Covid-19 testing efforts. The team will report directly to the president. This order will also reestablish the National Security Council's Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense — a section President Donald Trump disbanded. <i>Biden had previously announced members of the Covid-19 response team before he was sworn into office.</i>	Executive order
Establish a Covid-19 pandemic testing board	This new pandemic testing board will be tasked with increasing Covid-19 testing capacity, particularly for schools. Biden has prioritized reopening schools within 100 days of his swearing-in.	Executive order
Organize a Covid-19 Health Equity Task Force	The Biden administration will make moves to tackle health disparities between people of different races, sex and gender groups and ensure an equitable pandemic response by establishing a new health equity task force. This group will make recommendations regarding the disbursement of relief funding and outreach to underserved communities.	Executive order
Extend federal support for National Guard Reversal of Trump order	This presidential memo directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reimburse states for the use of National Guard forces to fight Covid-19. <i>Last summer, Trump reduced state funding for the National Guard by 25 percent.</i>	Memorandum
Make Covid-related data accessible	In an effort to provide more insight into the state of the pandemic, this order is aimed at making Covid-related data more publicly available and accessible. Biden calls on federal agencies to gather and analyze Covid-related data to better equip them to inform their pandemic response.	Executive order
Implement mask mandate on federal lands	The nationwide mask mandate requires everyone on federal lands and buildings to wear face coverings and social distance. This includes all federal employees and contractors.	Executive order

Sources: The White House, POLITICO staff reports



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COVID-19	DESCRIPTION/Additional context	TYPE OF ACTION
Mandate masks on buses, trains and planes	This order requires masks on all interstate U.S. transportation, including buses, planes and trains. Those seeking to enter the U.S. from another country will also need to provide a recent negative Covid-19 test.	Executive order
Protect workers from Covid-19	This order directs the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to establish and enforce stronger Covid-19 guidance in the workplace.	Executive order
Rejoin WHO <i>Reversal of Trump order</i>	In a letter to Secretary-General António Guterres, Biden vows to reestablish the U.S.' commitment to the global fight against Covid-19 and rejoin the World Health Organization — which Trump was in the process of withdrawing from.	Letter
Prioritize global health	This directive reestablishes the U.S.' commitment to global health and ensures that Biden's administration will work with other nations to fight Covid-19.	Directive
Invest in Covid-19 treatment	This order will accelerate the development of novel Covid-19 therapies, as well as support studies concerning the long-term impact of the virus. It will also provide additional assistance to critical care and long-term care facilities in need.	Executive order
Secure necessary supplies for the pandemic	This order calls on agencies to address pandemic supply shortfalls, starting with an immediate inventory of personal protective equipment and resources necessary for an effective vaccine rollout. <i>Biden vowed to administer 100 million Covid-19 vaccinations in his first 100 days.</i>	Executive order
Support schools to mitigate learning loss and reopen safely	This order directs the Education and Health and Human Services departments to provide schools with clear Covid-19 guidance and resources to ensure safe reopenings.	Executive order

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