



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

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Updates to State's COVID-19 Testing Requirements

Updates to Employee Testing Guidance for Schools and Certain Health Care Settings

On Tuesday, September 13, the State announced updated guidance pertaining to COVID-19 testing of those who are not fully vaccinated, affecting requirements in schools and in certain health care settings. This updated guidance will **go into effect on Saturday, September 17**.

The State will rescind two orders:

- 7/26/21 Health Care Worker Protections in High-Risk Settings:
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Unvaccinated-Workers-In-High-Risk-Settings.aspx>
- 8/11/21 Vaccine Verification for Workers in Schools:
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Vaccine-Verification-for-Workers-in-Schools.aspx>

The State will amend the following orders:

- 2/22/22 State and Local Correctional Facilities and Detention Centers Health Care Worker Vaccination Requirement: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Correctional-Facilities-and-Detention-Centers-Health-Care-Worker-Vaccination-Order.aspx>
- 2/2/22 Health Care Worker Vaccine Requirement: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Health-Care-Worker-Vaccine-Requirement.aspx>
- 2/22/22 Adult Care Facilities and Direct Care Worker Vaccine Requirement: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Adult-Care-Facilities-and-Direct-Care-Worker-Vaccine-Requirement.aspx>

With these updates, the State **no longer requires weekly testing for those workers who are not fully vaccinated in the following settings:** schools, dental offices, homeless shelters, Adult Day Programs Licensed by the California Department of Social Services, and non-medical correctional. Note that testing is still required at the federal level for employees of skilled nursing facilities.

Individual organizations may still offer testing for employees in alignment with CDC's guidance and should be prepared to ramp up testing at worksites in the event of a future outbreak or future requirement.

Public Health Department

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Testing is still required by Cal/OSHA if an employee has symptoms or has been exposed to an individual with COVID-19 while not wearing PPE.

Notably, the **vaccination and booster requirement for workers remains in effect in these settings**: skilled nursing facilities, health care, adult care, and *medical* correctional facilities. These settings must also **continue to track workers' vaccination or exemption status**.

The State no longer requires that workers in schools, homeless shelters, and non-medical correctional facilities be fully vaccinated, nor that these settings track vaccination status.

The County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department aligns with State guidance and will not issue more restrictive local guidance, nor deviate in any way from the State's order updates with respect to this issue.

As a reminder, vaccination remains important in preventing spread, COVID-19 hospitalization, long COVID, and death. For those who have been waiting for a non-mRNA COVID-19 vaccine option, the COVID-19 Novavax vaccine uses non-mRNA technology (similar to a flu shot). And, fully-vaccinated people age 12 and older may boost their vaccine protection with the updated bivalent booster, which provides protection against currently circulating strains of COVID-19 (Omicron BA.4 and BA.5) as well as the original strain.

Updates to Visitor Testing Guidance for Hospitals and Skilled Nursing Facilities

On Thursday, September 15, the State announced updated visitor guidance for hospitals and skilled nursing facilities:

- State Public Health Officer Order of September 15, 2022:
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Requirements-for-Visitors-in-Acute-Health-Care-and-Long-Term-Care-Settings.aspx>

This updated guidance, which **goes into effect on Saturday, September 17**, will **end the testing requirement for visitors** to hospitals and skilled nursing facilities (rescinds the [February 11, 2022 State Public Health Officer Order](#)). It is recommended that organizations be prepared to test visitors in the event of a future surge and possible future requirement.

Individual organizations may still test visitors and enforce their own more restrictive guidance.

Masking in these settings is still required by State law.

The County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department aligns with State guidance and will not issue more restrictive local guidance.

Stay Informed

For more information about COVID-19 in SLO County, visit slopublichealth.org/covid19.