

Frequently Asked Questions:

COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement for UCP Team Members

Updated January 27, 2022

Q1. Why is UCP implementing a vaccine/booster mandate

UCP is required by law to update our policies to comply with all federal, state, or local requirements as a condition of providing services. UCP will continue to update our policies to comply with all federal, state, or local mandates, which now include vaccine and booster mandates applicable to UCP's staff. More information on orders which apply to UCP can be found below:

On January 25, 2022, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued an updated "Adult Care Facilities and Direct Care Worker Vaccine Requirement: [Order of the State Public Health Officer Adult Care Facilities and Direct Care Worker Vaccine Requirement](#)

On December 16, 2021, Cal/OSHA issued an update to its COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS), with an effective date of January 14th, 2022: [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Resources](#)

Q2. Are people with disabilities more at risk from COVID-19?

Yes. The individuals with disabilities that UCP serves are at a higher risk than the general population from COVID-19. Factors such as underlying medical conditions, congregate living settings, support staff exposure increase our clients' risk of exposure to COVID-19 and increases our clients' risk of developing serious or deadly complications from a COVID-19 infection. Therefore, the State has put in additional safety requirements that include a vaccine mandate to protect our clients.

This risk is not hypothetical. UCP can confirm individuals who we know, and support have passed away from COVID-19 infections. While we have found no evidence to suggest that any of these infections were transmitted to a client by a UCP staff, we recognize that this could happen. Therefore, all of us are responsible (collectively and individually) to follow all safety requirements to minimize the risk to the people we serve.

Below are a few links to articles explaining the heightened risk to people with disabilities:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-pandemic-isnt-over-particularly-for-people-with-disabilities-202105252464>

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/humandevelopment/covid-19/people-with-disabilities.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/health/covid-developmental-disabilities.html>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/03/210305123809.htm>

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2021/01/07/cdc-adds-down-syndrome-to-covid-19-increased-risk-list/29140/>

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2021/03/10/intellectual-disability-among-greatest-covid-19-risk-factors-study-finds/29234/>

Q3. What is the deadline to get vaccinated or submit proof of a booster shot?

Vaccinated staff must receive their final shot and submit proof of vaccination no later than November 30, 2021. Eligible vaccinated staff must submit proof of their booster shot no later than February 28, 2022.

Please note: two-dose vaccinations such as Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, have different recommended intervals between the first and final shot. The Pfizer vaccine recommends a 21-day waiting period while the Moderna vaccine recommends a 28-day waiting period. Therefore, staff choosing the Pfizer vaccine should receive their first shot no later than November 9, 2021 and staff choosing the Moderna vaccine should receive their first shot no later than November 2, 2021. To obtain the booster: staff who received Pfizer or Moderna must wait 5 months from the date of their last shot, while those who received the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine must wait 2 months from the date of their shot. Staff who only become eligible for their booster on or after March 1st will have a 15-day grace period to obtain their booster, based on the date they become eligible (for example, someone who becomes booster-eligible on March 15th will have until March 30th to obtain their booster).

(Day Program Staff Only: You must test weekly during the 15-day grace period when you become eligible for the booster.)

Q4. What is considered as acceptable proof of vaccination?

The Order requires UCP to obtain one of the following as proof of vaccination:

1. COVID-19 Record Card, photo, or scan of a vaccination card;
2. Documentation of vaccination from a healthcare provider;
3. A digital record that includes a QR code that can be read by a Smart Health Card Reader;
4. Documentation of vaccination from other contracted employers who follow these vaccination guidelines and standards.
5. Any documentation must be from a reputable source and include the following: your full name, date of birth, vaccine type, vaccination dates.

UCP recommends that staff looking for proof of vaccination start with California's Digital COVID-19 Vaccine Record website here:

<https://myvaccinerecord.cdph.ca.gov/>

Note: If information on the COVID-19 Record Card is incorrect or illegible, staff will be required to provide a digital copy for verification.

Q5. Which vaccines are accepted?

To be eligible, vaccines must be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the World Health Organization (WHO). Vaccines approved by either organization would meet vaccination requirements. The FDA currently approves of the Pfizer, Moderna, and Janssen vaccines and boosters. You can find information on FDA approved vaccines and boosters here: [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) | FDA](#). You can find information on WHO approved vaccines here: <https://extranet.who.int/pgweb/vaccines/vaccinescovid-19-vaccine-eul-issued>

Q6. Can I provide an anti-body test or other documentation showing natural immunity instead of a vaccine?

No. Unfortunately this is not an option in either the State CDPH order or the new Cal/OSHA ETS mandate.

Q7. How can I upload my proof of vaccination?

Follow the instructions below if you are submitting a vaccination card, including cards showing both your vaccine and booster (if applicable). If you are ONLY submitting proof of a booster shot, please email it to covid@ucpsacto.org as these cannot be submitted through UCP Connect.

1. Login to UCP's online staff portal at www.ucpconnect.org.
2. Click the "Vaccination Status Update" tile below the main image. Follow the instructions on this page.
3. Select the appropriate registration status to begin the process.
4. Completing the course will take you to the appropriate registration form.
5. Type in your full name, position, email, and program.
6. Select your Vaccination Type and dates of your vaccination.
7. Upload proof of vaccination.
8. Read and check off each attestation (all are required).
9. Click the "Submit" button and the "Mark Complete" button.

Submit

Mark Complete ✓

10. You should have received a confirmation email with a copy of your completed registration email. Check to make sure.

Q8. What if I can't login to UCP Connect?

You should have previously received an email from UCP Connect with your login information. Look for that email to get started. Here is a quick video explaining how to login to UCP Connect if you need assistance:

<https://vimeo.com/566744540>.

If you forgot your password, you can use the reset password function on the login page.

If you still need help logging in you can email support at

ucpconnecthelp@ucpsacto.org.

Q9. What are the exceptions or exemptions for unvaccinated workers?

At this time there are only three types of exceptions or exemptions that are allowed under this order:

1. Position Exceptions
2. Medical Exemptions
3. Religious Exemptions

Q10. Who qualifies to apply for a position exception?

To qualify for a position exception, UCP must be able to verify that the worker's position is excluded from the State Order. Currently the only UCP staff eligible for this exception are workers who meet all the following requirements:

1. If providing a direct care to clients, the staff can only provide services to a recipient with whom they live or who are a family member of the recipient for whom they provide services;
2. If providing direct care to clients, the staff can only provide services to one client or family;
3. The staff cannot have regular contact with any other UCP staff;
4. The staff cannot regularly work or visit a UCP facility or client home.

Q11. UCP is required to review and approve or deny this request. Staff who receive a position exception from UCP may not be required to complete weekly testing.

Who qualifies to apply for a medical exemption?

To be eligible for a medical exemption a worker must submit a written request to UCP requesting a medical exemption with a statement signed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional practicing under the license of a physician stating that the individual qualifies for the exemption (the statement should not describe the underlying medical condition or disability) and indicating the probable duration of the worker's inability to receive the vaccine (or if the duration is unknown or permanent, so indicate).

Staff who receive an approved exemption are required to complete and submit weekly Covid-19 tests, and are required to wear masks at all times when working with clients, families, or staff, or are working in a UCP facility or client home. Acceptable masks include surgical masks or higher level respirators; cloth masks are acceptable as long as they are made of at least two layers of tightly woven fabric that is free of any holes or openings. To determine whether a cloth mask meets this requirement, staff members should hold the mask up to a light source to determine if any holes or openings are visible.

Q12. Who qualifies to apply for a religious exemption?

To be eligible for a religious exemption a worker must submit a written request to UCP with a statement that they are declining the vaccination based on sincerely held religious belief. This request must include explanation of those beliefs. Staff who receive an approved exemption are required to complete and submit weekly Covid-19 tests, and are required to wear surgical masks or higher level respirators at all times when working with clients, families, or staff, or are working in a UCP facility or client home.

Q13. How can I submit a request for an exception or exemption?

1. Login to UCP's online staff portal at www.ucpconnect.org.
2. Click the "Vaccination Status Update" tile below the main image. Follow the instructions on this page.
3. Select the appropriate registration status to begin the process.
4. Completing the course will take you to the appropriate registration form.
5. Type in your full name, position, email, and program.
6. If requesting a medical exemption, upload qualifying physician's note ready to upload.
7. Read and check off each attestation (all are required).
8. Click the "Submit" button and the "Mark Complete" button.

Submit

Mark Complete ✓

9. You should have received a confirmation email with a copy of your completed registration email. Check to make sure.

Note: UCP is only accepting exception or exemption requests using UCP Connects online submission system.

Q14. What is the deadline to submit an exception or exemption request?

Q15. Staff requesting an exception or exemption may do so through www.ucpconnect.org. Can UCP deny my exception or exemption request?

Yes. UCP may deny requests for a variety of reasons. For example, UCP may deny requests that are incomplete or fail to provide sufficient information. UCP may deny any request that does not meet the exception or exemption requirements. UCP may deny requests that create an unreasonable health or safety risk for UCP staff or clients. UCP may deny requests that create an unreasonable financial or administrative burden.

UCP is also required to monitor previously issued exemptions to ensure they continue to be reasonable and in alignment with changing health, safety, and legal requirements. Previously issued exemptions can be withdrawn.

Q16. What happens if my exception or exemption request is denied?

Staff who fail to receive an exception or exemption are required to become vaccinated & boosted to be in compliance with this order. Failure to comply will result in a temporary suspension until the staff can submit the required documentation and be cleared by UCP's HR team.

Q17. What are UCP's mask requirements for unvaccinated and vaccinated workers?

The Order requires all workers to wear a surgical mask or higher-level respirator (no cloth masks or face shields) at all times when working. This includes anytime the staff is working with a client or other staff and anytime a staff is working inside a UCP facility or inside a family home.

The latest version of Cal/OSHA's COVID-19 Prevention ETS defines a face covering as a surgical mask, a medical procedure mask, a respirator worn voluntarily, or a tightly woven fabric or non-woven material of at least two layers (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through any holes or perforations when held up to a light source) that completely covers the nose and mouth and is secured to the head with ties, ear loops, or elastic bands that go behind the head. If gaiters are worn, they shall have two layers of fabric or be folded to make two layers. A face covering is a solid piece of material without slits, visible holes, or punctures, and must fit snugly over the nose, mouth, and chin with no large gaps on the outside of the face. A face covering does not include a scarf, ski mask, balaclava, bandana, turtleneck, collar, or single layer of fabric.

This definition includes clear face coverings or cloth face coverings with a clear plastic panel that, despite the non-cloth material allowing light to pass through,

otherwise meet this definition and which may be used to facilitate communication with people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or others who need to see a speaker's mouth or facial expressions to understand speech or sign language respectively.

Q18. Who is required to complete weekly COVID-19 testing?

All unvaccinated staff, except for those who tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days, who receive a medical or religious exemption are required to complete weekly COVID-19 testing.

All staff who are booster-eligible, but not yet boosted are required to complete weekly COVID-19 testing. The only exception is for those who tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days.

Unvaccinated staff who receive a position exemption may be exempt from weekly testing if approved by HR.

Q19. Will UCP provide weekly testing options for unvaccinated staff?

Generally speaking, no. UCP does not have the resources or capability to provide in-house Covid-19 testing for all staff who require weekly testing. Staff are required to arrange their own testing and submit those results to UCP each week to remain authorized for work. Staff who require weekly testing are encouraged to find a local and convenient testing location to use.

UCP recommends staff with testing requirements create weekly appointments for themselves using the Project Baseline portal here:

<https://www.projectbaseline.com/studies/covid-19/>

Other options include utilizing testing sites provided by your local County Public Health Department or your own primary care physician. Many commercial pharmacies also offer this testing.

Q20. How should staff submit required weekly tests to UCP?

UCP provides an online system for staff to submit weekly tests in our staff portal at www.ucpconnect.org.

Q21. What types of COVID-19 tests are allowed?

The State Order requires tests to be either a PCR or antigen test which has Emergency Use Authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Self-administered at home tests may be acceptable if witnessed by HR or your direct supervisor but will need to be approved in advance. .

Tests must be from a reputable source and include the employee's full name, test date, test type, and test results.

Tests required by an employee by another employer can also be used for UCP if the test meets all of the requirements above.

Q22. Do I have to complete weekly tests even if I only work once a month or once every few months?

Staff who work intermittently with UCP (not every week) must complete a COVID-19 test the week prior to returning to work and then weekly thereafter while working for UCP.

Q23. Can UCP staff be compensated for completing weekly COVID-19 tests?

Hourly staff may be compensated for time spent completing and submitting a required COVID-19 test and for time spent traveling to and from testing appointments. All staff can be compensated for travel miles spent driving to and from testing sites, and any out-of-pocket testing costs to the employee that were not covered by insurance or other funding source.

Q24. Will UCP keep records of my vaccination, exception or exemption requests, and test results?

Yes. UCP is required to maintain these records for all employees and make them available upon request to public health agencies to confirm we are in compliance with this Order.

All UCP records must comply with CDPH Vaccine Record Guidelines and Standards which can be found here:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Vaccine-Record-Guidelines-Standards.aspx>

Q25. What happens if I remain unvaccinated/unboosted, or fail to submit proof of vaccination/booster, and do not obtain an approved exception or exemption from UCP?

Staff who fail to submit proof of vaccination or receive a UCP-approved exception or exemption will be placed on a temporary suspension making them ineligible to work with clients, ineligible to work in any UCP facility, and ineligible to work directly with other UCP staff members. This suspension will remain in effect until the employee completes the required activities to be cleared by UCP's HR department.

Staff who are booster-eligible, but not yet boosted, will be required to test weekly, unless they have already tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days.

Those who are vaccinated, but not yet booster-eligible, will not be required to test weekly.

Q26. Can UCP's vaccine requirements change?

Yes. UCP Staff should be prepared for future updates to UCP's safety policies and/or vaccination requirements. This is because UCP is required to comply with any new required federal, state, or local orders that apply to our employees. UCP will promptly inform all employees about any new changes to our vaccine or safety policies.

Q27. Am I required to disclose my vaccination status to UCP?

Yes. All employees are required to accurately disclose their vaccination status to UCP's management and HR upon request. This includes details regarding the type of vaccine/booster they received, and any information required for their exception or exemption requests. This information will remain confidential. This is required for UCP to ensure that all required safety protocols are being followed.

Q28. Am I required to disclose my vaccination status to fellow staff, UCP clients, or members of the public while working?

No. Employees are not required to disclose details regarding their vaccination status or any other private or medical information with fellow staff or clients.

Employees are required to respond truthfully to any inquiries regarding their vaccination status to clients, staff, management, and the public. Employees who do not want to answer questions, should decline to answer. Providing false, misleading, or inaccurate information about their vaccination status (such as suggesting you are vaccinated when you are not) to anyone including UCP clients is a serious offense which can result in immediate termination.

Q29. Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

Staff with additional questions are asked to submit those to UCP's HR staff via email at covid@ucpsacto.org. UCP will be reviewing questions submitted to us and will provide an updated FAQ with new questions as necessary. Staff are also free to discuss this mandate with their program manager or direct supervisor.