Frequently Asked Questions:
COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement for UCP Team Members
Updated November 15, 2021

Q1. Why is UCP implementing a vaccine 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 mandates for the majority of UCP's staff. More information on orders which apply to UCP can be found below:

September 28th, 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued an "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

On November 5th, 2021 the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) issued an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS: https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/ets2

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 vaccination?

Vaccinated staff must receive their final shot and submit proof of vaccination no later than November 30, 2021.

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.

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/

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. You can information on FDA approved vaccines here: https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines. You can find information on WHO approved vaccines here: https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/vaccines/vaccinescovid-19-vaccine-eul-issued

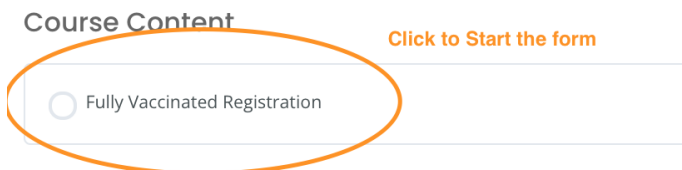**Q6. Can I provide an anti-body test or other documentation showing natural immunity instead of a vaccine?**

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

Q7. How can I upload my proof of vaccination?

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.

I am Fully Vaccinated	Position Exception Request
Religious Exemption Request	Partially Vaccinated
Medical Exemption Request	

4. Click the registration form name at the bottom of the page to begin registration

Course Content

Click to Start the form

○ Fully Vaccinated Registration

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. Do I need to re-submit my vaccination records if I have previously provided them to UCP or my manager?

Yes. New vaccine mandate requirements require that UCP collect additional information in a revised format. Therefore, all employees need to submit their proof of vaccination into the UCP Connect online system, even if they have previously submitted copies to UCP.

Q9. 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.

Q10. 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

Q11. 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.

UCP is required to review and approve or deny this request prior to November 30, 2021. Staff who receive a position exception from UCP may not be required to complete weekly testing.

UPDATE: Please note that the new OSHA ETS mandate requirements appears to require all staff to undergo weekly testing effective 1/1/22. Therefore, UCP may not be able to waive this requirement for staff with a position exception.

Q12. 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). UCP is required to review and approve or deny this request prior to November 30, 2021.

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. 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. UCP is required to review and approve or deny this request prior to November 30, 2021.

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.

Q14. 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.

I am Fully Vaccinated	Position Exception Request
Religious Exemption Request	Partially Vaccinated
Medical Exemption Request	

4. Click the registration form name at the bottom of the page to begin registration

Course Content

◯ Religious Exemption Request

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.

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.

Q15. What is the deadline to submit an exception or exemption request?

Staff requesting an exception or exemption should do so as soon as possible after the UCP exemption forms become available on www.ucpconnect.org. All exceptions and exemption request must be received no later than November 15, 2021 using UCP's approved forms and online submission system.

Q16. 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.

Q17. What happens if my exception or exemption request is denied?

Staff who fail to receive an exception or exemption are required to become vaccinated to be in compliance with this order by November 30, 2021. 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.

Q18. What are UCP mask requirements for unvaccinated and vaccinated workers?

The Order requires all unvaccinated workers who receive exemptions to <u>wear a surgical mask or higher-level respirator (no cloth masks or face shields) at all times when working</u>. 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.

UCP mask requirements for vaccinated workers remains unchanged. See UCP's COVID-19 Safety Protocols for more information: https://ucpsacto.org/programs-services/covid-19/

Q19. Who is required to complete weekly COVID-19 testing?

All unvaccinated staff who receive a medical or religious exemption are required to complete weekly COVID-19 testing.

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

UPDATE: Please note that the new OSHA ETS mandate requirements appears to require all staff to undergo weekly testing effective 1/1/22. Therefore, UCP may not be able to waive this requirement for staff with position exception.

Q20. Will UCP provide weekly testing options for unvaccinated staff?

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.

Q21. How should staff submit required weekly tests to UCP?

UCP will be providing an online system for staff to submit weekly tests in our staff portal at www.ucpconnect.org by November 30, 2021.

Q22. 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 generally do not meet testing requirements.

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 meet all of the requirements above.

Q23. 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 within 7 days of returning to work and once a week while working for UCP.

Q24. 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.

Q25. 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

Q26. What happens if I remain unvaccinated, or fail to submit proof of vaccination, 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 by November 30th 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.

Q27. 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 is aware of several potential new mandates that could impact our staff if enacted. UCP will promptly inform all employees about any new changes to our vaccine or safety policies.

Q28. 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 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.

Q29. 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.

Q30. 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.