

Labor Relations Office

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Governor Gavin Newsom
Secretary, Government Operations Agency Yolanda Richardson
Director Eraina Ortega

July 26, 2021

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES - Via Email Only

RE: Notice of CalHR Policy for COVID-19 Testing

Dear Labor Leaders,

The combination of low vaccination rates in some communities and the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant of COVID-19 has resulted in increasing case rates.

As of last week, the statewide case rate doubled from a low in May of 1.9 cases/100,000/day to at least 9.5/100,000/day. Our testing positivity was at a low of 0.7% in June, now it has risen to 5.2%. Our hospitalizations went from a low in June of under 900, and have now increased by almost 75%.

The vast majority of new cases involve unvaccinated individuals, with a 600% higher case rate among the unvaccinated compared with those who are vaccinated.

In response to this concerning increase in cases, CalHR is implementing COVID-19 testing of all unvaccinated state employees working on site as an additional health and safety standard to protect the state workforce and the public it serves, and to ensure that employees critical to the continuity of state operations will be able to perform their duties.

State departments will implement mandatory COVID-19 testing of unvaccinated state employees in addition to other precautions already required for unvaccinated employees. The testing protocol for state employees will be phased in over a period of weeks. Departments will provide notice to the designated employee representatives once the testing protocol and start date for their department is established.

Testing is a proven COVID-19 prevention strategy that will complement the other protections currently in place. Because the increase in cases is heavily concentrated in unvaccinated individuals, and consistent with guidance from the California Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Emergency Temporary Standards approved by the California Occupational Safety and Health Board, fully vaccinated individuals are exempt from COVID-19 testing. Fully vaccinated individuals shall be allowed to elect to participate in COVID-19 testing.

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Self-attestation of vaccine status will not be sufficient evidence of vaccination for exemption from testing or wearing a face covering in state facilities. State departments are instructed to implement procedures to collect and maintain evidence of vaccination from employees as soon as possible with full compliance by Monday, August 2, 2021.

Any employee seeking to be exempt from COVID-19 testing or wearing a face covering must provide evidence of vaccination. Employees should access their Digital COVID-19 Vaccine Record to receive a link to a QR code* and digital copy of their vaccine record. If an employee cannot access their digital vaccine record, they may provide a vaccine card or other medical record establishing full vaccination.

More information will be provided in the coming days as we secure and begin to deploy testing resources.

For questions about this communication, please contact the assigned CalHR Labor Relations Officer.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and leadership as we work together to support a safe workplace.

Paul Starkey

Deputy Director, Labor Relations

California Department of Human Resources

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