



COVID Testing Resource Guide and Frequently Asked Questions
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5/11/2022 Revision: Testing is required for all employees, regardless of booster status, on day 3-5 after a close contact exposure.

Background: Testing for COVID 19 infection continues to be a cornerstone in reducing the spread of COVID and supporting safe worksites for employees and the public. Although COVID cases are greatly decreased in our region since the Winter surge, testing continues to play an important role and compliments existing effective strategies to reduce the spread of disease. These prevention strategies include staying home if you are unwell, use of appropriate and effective face covering that are required in some settings and recommended in all others, maintaining social distancing where possible. Booster shots are highly recommended and required in some sectors. Testing also allows for early diagnosis and possible use of antiviral medications.

The scenarios where testing is either recommended or required are outlined below, along with answers to commonly asked questions about COVID testing and information on City testing resources and locations.

Vaccination status: The definitions have changed. Your vaccination status determines whether testing is recommended or required:

Up to Date: You are considered “up to date” if you have completed a primary vaccine series and received a booster, or you have recently completed an initial vaccine series and are not yet eligible for booster. You are Up to Date two weeks after the initial vaccine series and then again immediately on receiving a booster once eligible. You are no longer Up to Date if you are booster-eligible but have not yet received a booster.

Vaccinated with a Complete Initial Series: Older documents refer to “Fully Vaccinated” for this category. You are considered “vaccinated with a complete initial series” two weeks after you have completed the entire recommended initial series of vaccination.

Booster Eligible: You are booster eligible when at least 5 months have passed after receiving a second dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or once 2 months have passed after receiving the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccination.

Testing types:

- **PCR:** (Polymerase Chain Reaction) is a molecular test run in a lab that does not yield immediate results. It recognizes recent infection by identifying the presence of fragments of the virus, has the most accurate and reliable results, and can stay positive for weeks to months even after infection and infectivity have passed. It is not a good test for acute transmissibility (the ability to spread the infection to others). It is the test most regularly used by health care facilities, physician’s offices, and CityTestSF.

- **Rapid antigen test:** This is a test that looks for the presence of proteins from the COVID-19 virus. Many varieties are offered for self-administration and home use. They do not take a lab for processing and yield results within 15-30 min. Used broadly by schools, for travel, and for sports, it reflects active infection and transmissibility. It can have more false results, usually from testing too early, where it does not recognize an early infection. It is more accurate at showing when a person is no longer infectious by giving a negative result after confirmed infection, whether tested previously by a PCR or rapid test. Departments may order rapid tests through the normal contracting process.

When to use:

- **PCR: Required** for any workplace-originating infection that may result in a workers compensation claim. Once PCR result is positive: do not retest again with a PCR for 90 days since it may stay positive even though the person is no longer infectious.
- **Rapid Antigen Test** is required in several settings:
 - A. For COVID positive employee who seeks to leave isolation early, test on day 5. If negative, they can return to work on day 6.
 - B. After a close contact exposure, all employees may continue to work but are required to test on day 3-5 regardless of booster status.
 - C. For those required by the local Health Officer order to get a booster and who are booster eligible but not yet up-to-date, testing is required weekly or twice weekly, depending on the setting, along with indoor masking at all times during the interim period before receiving booster. Employees must test twice weekly in healthcare and high-risk settings and weekly for all other settings.

Who can administer:

If testing is required to allow an employee back to the worksite early from quarantine, or after a close contact in a fully vaccinated employee, results must be observed either onsite in person or via telehealth. Your department will identify who will confirm results, this does not take specific training, rather the confirmation of results.

Upload your results into People & Pay:

If you are required to obtain a test for any of the reasons listed above, employees must upload the results into People & Pay using the Employee Gateway. Link to instructions:

<https://sfemployeeportalsupport.sfgov.org/support/solutions/articles/11000077233-how-to-submit-your-covid-19-or-booster-vaccine-status-via-the-sf-employee-portal>

Frequently Asked Questions

Returning to the worksite:

Can I get tested for a close contact exposure if that exposure was not at work? Yes, in order to have a workplace that is free of COVID risk, testing between days 3 and 5 after the last exposure is required regardless of your booster status. Unless the employee has COVID-19 symptoms, they should continue to work.

What rapid test results are required? Tests are required in three key situations.

- A negative test is required for any employee to shorten their isolation from 10 days after contracting COVID (meaning they have a positive test or developed symptoms).
- A negative test is required after a close contact exposure for any employee on day 3-5.

- A negative test is required, either weekly or twice weekly, to work in settings for employees required by the local Health Officer order to be vaccinated and boosted once eligible.

Where are test results recorded? Employees will enter their own test results in the People and Pay system using the Employee Gateway. The employee will also upload a photo of a home-test kit result or a copy/photo of the lab report. The Department HR professional may assist with this.

Do I need a PCR if I have a home rapid test that is positive? Only if this was a worksite contracted case and possible workers compensation claim. If so, you will need to confirm with a documented positive PCR, otherwise your rapid results can be shared with you supervisor and uploaded to People and Pay.

I had a workplace close contact exposure, what leave do I use? For most settings, regardless of booster status, you may continue reporting to work as long as you do not have any symptoms-

I am an employee who is required to get a booster, can I keep testing instead of getting a booster? No. Testing is used for employees who are booster eligible but have not yet received a booster. The testing requirement does not extend the deadline for receipt of a booster.

Can my employer require me to come into the worksite for a test? Yes, where tests are required in order to stay at the worksite or to return early after a positive test when you are not having symptoms. Employees who refuse to participate in required testing will not be allowed on site and must use their accrued leave (not COVID leave) for their absence.

COVID tests for symptoms:

What if I develop symptoms? Do not come to work, (or if you feel ill at work, leave work) and seek testing from your healthcare provider or CityTestSF, or use a Rapid Antigen test.

What test types are allowed? PCR and Rapid Antigen tests are useful for diagnosing COVID. Other types of tests such as antibody tests have no role.

When should I do a rapid home test? Ideally day 3 or later after exposure. Testing too soon can give a false negative result.

What if I have symptoms and my rapid home test is negative? If symptoms persist, retest with a home kit a day or two later or get a PCR test. Testing too early with a rapid test can be negative when indeed there is infection. If testing is negative, and you still have symptoms, consult with your own health care provider.

Where can I obtain a test? Your department may have rapid tests available, just ask your HR professional. Local pharmacies and markets are now well stocked with Rapid Antigen tests. You may also order four free home test kits per household directly from the US Government through the postal service link: special.usps.com/testkits.

Your healthplan may also reimburse you if you had to purchase the Rapid Antigen kit yourself: link <https://sfhss.org/news/health-plan-reimbursements-covid-home-test-kits>.

PCR testing can also be obtained at the following locations:

Department Access	Designated Test Site	Hours/Availability
All City Employees	CityTestSF - Alemany	By Appointment, some drop in availability Monday 12PM-8PM Tuesday- Thursday 8:30AM-8PM Friday 8:30AM – 1PM
DPH Employees Only	ZSFG Hospital	8:00AM-5:00PM Monday-Friday
DPH Laguna Honda Employees Juvenile Probation Department Employees	Laguna Honda Hospital	Drop-In Monday - Friday 6:30AM to 6PM (last test is done at 5:45PM) Closed: Weekends and holidays Drive thru by Appointment Only arranged by DPH Contact Investigation team (Monday to Friday) Hours: 7AM – 4PM Closed: Weekends and holidays
Sheriff's Department DPH Jail Health SF Police Dept SF Fire Dept District Attorney's Office Public Defender's Office Adult Probation Dept	Hall of Justice/County Jail #1	7AM-3PM 7 days per week PCR testing for staff Rapid testing: Binax for visitors Drop-in OK
Sheriff's Department DPH Jail Health	County Jail #2	6AM-4PM 7 days per week
Open to public & any employee: Walk-in or can register and make an appointment for their PCR test at https://lhi.care/covidtesting	Monday: City central administration, Civic Center, 101 Grove St, San Francisco 94102 Tuesday & Thursday: City College, Evans Center, 1400 Evans Ave, San Francisco 94124 Tuesday Wednesday: BHS Central admin, 1380 Howard St, San Francisco 94103 Friday: SFDPH admin, 25 Van Ness Ave San Francisco 94102 Sunday: Gilman playground, 903 Gilman Ave San Francisco 94124	All days: 8AM to 4PM