



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

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### \*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\*

## UPDATES TO SAN FRANCISCO'S COVID-19 HEALTH ORDER INCLUDES CHANGES TO INDOOR MASKING, TESTING AND VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

*With COVID-19 cases still high but dropping rapidly, local health order changes begin to ease mask requirements and take steps toward longer term shift in bringing local health orders into alignment with state guidelines where it can be done safely*

**San Francisco, CA**— Beginning on February 1, San Francisco office workers, gym members and other “stable cohorts” of people may remove masks indoors again, reinstating the mask exemption that was in place before the latest Omicron surge. Given the highly transmissible nature of the variant, there is an additional requirement that individuals in these stable cohort groups be “up to date” on their vaccinations, including the primary series and boosters when eligible, as the best protection against the virus.

Other COVID-19 safety guidelines in these settings remain in effect and include a means for others who do not or cannot meet the vaccination requirements to join the group with the added safety of showing a negative test and wearing a mask.

Additional updates begin a new shift in bringing San Francisco’s Safer Together Health Order into closer alignment with current California Department of Public Health (CDPH) requirements, where it can be done safely. These include allowing patrons to enter indoor “mega-events” of 500 people or more with a negative COVID-19 test as an alternative to being “up to date” on vaccinations (masking would still be required). Further changes allow religious and medical exemptions to vaccination requirements with a negative COVID-19 test, affecting locations such as indoor restaurants, bars, gyms, fitness centers, and other venues where food or drink is consumed or where people have elevated breathing. These changes also begin February 1. The public should be mindful that people in some settings may not be fully vaccinated or boosted and so should use good judgment when attending gatherings or events.

**Consistent with the state’s current mask rules, San Francisco’s indoor mask mandate remains in effect for most public settings, regardless of vaccination status.** For more details on the changes to the health order, go to: [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders)



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“As we come out of this latest surge and face a future in which COVID-19 will remain among us, San Francisco will take a balanced approach in our response to COVID-19 by aligning with state requirements and guidelines where we can do so safely,” said Health Officer, Dr. Susan Philip. “We also acknowledge areas where San Francisco can be further ahead in easing restrictions, such as the indoor mask exemption for stable cohorts, given our highly vaccinated and boosted population. We will do so carefully and by following our local data and the science, as there are still San Franciscans who are medically vulnerable to the disease and communities that remain highly impacted when case rates are high.”

Rapid antigen tests may be taken within the day before entry, and PCR laboratory tests may be taken within two days before entry. A photo taken of a self-administered rapid antigen test (such as an at-home test) is not acceptable proof of a negative test. Verification of the test result from a third party is needed. For these events and locations, a printed or electronic document from the test provider or laboratory may be used.

The health order also added a definition for “booster-eligible,” which means the time when a person qualifies to receive a booster under U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidelines. Until a person is eligible for a booster, they are considered “up to date” on their vaccination. More information about booster eligibility can be found at: [sf.gov/information/get-your-booster](https://sf.gov/information/get-your-booster).

Clarification has also been provided on when a person may receive a vaccination or booster following a COVID-19 infection. While clinical data does not yet provide a definitive answer to this question, for now the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH) recommends that people get vaccinated or receive a booster dose as soon as possible at least 10 days but no more than 30 days after recovery from infection and discontinuation of isolation, unless a healthcare provider has a strong reason for the booster to be delayed.

Additional changes to the health order affect personnel in high-risk settings and include:

- Extending the deadline a month from February 1 to March 1 for personnel in high-risk settings to be up-to-date on vaccination, meaning receiving a booster shot when eligible. The extension of the deadline aligns with state requirements, but also includes San Francisco’s health order requirements on boosters for people whose regular work hours are outside of designated high-risk settings, but who visit high-risk settings as part of their work (such as many police officers, paramedics, and deputy sheriffs working in jails)

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