



January 11, 2022

To: All Palomar College Employees

From: David Joseph Montoya III, Assistant Superintendent/Vice-President, Human Resource Services

Re: Updated California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Recommendations & Available Leaves

Updated CDPH Recommendations on Isolation and Quarantine

On December 27, 2021, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) updated the [Isolation and Quarantine Recommendations](#) for the public motivated by research indicating most COVID-19 transmissions occur within the first few days after contracting the virus. [The CDPH similarly updated its guidance](#), which is more stringent than the CDC's. The District now requires all employees to adhere to the more strict CDPH guidelines.

Isolation for COVID-19 Positive Individuals

Applicable to Everyone:

All individuals with COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should stay home for at least five calendar days. Isolation can end after day five if symptoms are not present or resolving and if an antigen test collected on day five or later is negative. If unable to test, isolation can end after the tenth calendar day, only if symptoms resolve. Individuals should stay in contact with the COVID Response Action Team in regards to their isolation.

Quarantine for Individuals Exposed to COVID-19

Applicable to Unvaccinated or Vaccinated Individuals Who Have Not Received a Booster but Are Eligible:

Unvaccinated individuals who are exposed to COVID-19, and vaccinated people who are eligible for a booster but have not yet received a booster who are exposed to COVID-19, should stay home for at least five days and get an antigen test on day five. They may return to work after day 5 if no symptoms emerge and the results of the test taken on day 5 are negative. Without a test, people should quarantine for 10 days.

No Quarantine Required

Boosted or Vaccinated but Not Yet Booster-Eligible:

Boosted individuals and those that are vaccinated but not yet eligible for the booster do not need to quarantine if exposed to someone with COVID-19. Testing on day 5, after exposure, is recommended.

Testing Before Returning to Campus on January 31

The District *recommends* that all employees, independent of their vaccination status receive a test for COVID-19 within 3-5 business days prior to the start of their scheduled date to return to onsite work. Please note, employees with medical or religious exemptions are still required to test on a weekly basis.

Individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 90 days should not pursue a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) COVID-19 test due to the high likelihood of a positive result, even though you are no longer symptomatic or contagious. However, an antigen test (often referred to as a rapid test) can be taken to determine currency of contagions. If an employee receives a positive antigen test result, they should continue to self-isolate and not return to onsite work. Individuals should stay in contact with the COVID Response Action Team in regards to their isolation.

PCR COVID-19 testing is available at the main campus and education centers in Escondido and Rancho Bernardo. The schedule is posted [here](#). You must make an appointment through the Cleared4 platform to test at one of the Palomar College testing sites. You can book your appointment by clicking on “Book On-Site Covid Test” on your home screen of the Cleared4 platform.



Available COVID-19 Leaves

All employees have the following COVID-19 leaves:

- *Vaccination Leaves* - The District shall provide employees, receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, leave time for attending a vaccine appointment or for those that cannot work or telework due to vaccine-related symptoms. The leave provided to employees in this Letter of Agreement shall not be pulled from any employees' existing leave accruals.
- *Exclusion Pay* – In accordance with Cal OSHA, an employee who was excluded from work because of a *workplace COVID-19 exposure* should receive exclusion pay if: 1) the employee was not assigned to telework during that time; and 2) the employee did not receive Disability Payments or Workers' Compensation Temporary Disability Payments during the exclusion period. More information about [Exclusion Pay may be found here](#).

General Questions and Answers

Several questions have arisen over the past week due to the increase in COVID-19 cases and the District's postponement of onsite work from January 18 to January 31. Here are the following questions received and their answers:

I am not feeling well. Can I get a COVID-19 test at a Palomar College testing site?

If you are ill, please stay home and do not come to the main campus or other District location. Please complete a COVID-19 questionnaire available on our COVID-19 [website](#) and our healthcare professionals in CRAT will reach out to you as soon as possible to provide support and guidance. The Palomar College testing sites are purely for surveillance testing and not for individuals who are experiencing symptoms.

I am vaccinated. Do I need to test more than once if my onsite work schedule is intermittent (e.g., once a week, once a month, etc.)?

It is only recommended that vaccinated employees test once before you begin your onsite work schedule. This is only a recommendation; there is no requirement for vaccinated employees to test. Unvaccinated employees with an approved exemption are still required to test weekly. Individuals who test positive should self-isolate at home and will receive follow-up contact from CRAT as soon as possible.

If I contract COVID-19 or need to quarantine/self-isolate and there is no applicable state/federal leave, or I have exhausted my COVID-19 leave, do I need to use my own personal leave?

Yes, you will need to use your own personal leave in accordance with the relevant collective bargaining agreement or employee handbook if there is no applicable state/federal leave (e.g., [Exclusion Pay](#)). Additional leave information for each employee group is included above in this memo.

- [Palomar Faculty Federation \(PFF\) Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)
- [Council of Classified Employees \(CCE\) Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)
- [Confidential and Supervisory Team Handbook](#)
- [Administrative Association Handbook](#)

If I pursue an antigen test to reduce my self-isolation due to having COVID-19, will the District reimburse me for the cost of the test?

New COVID-19 requirements fall under working conditions and will be negotiated with union groups.

Will the District require booster COVID-19 immunizations?

The District has not established a requirement for the COVID-19 booster. The current CDC recommendations regarding COVID-19 vaccination and boosters may be found [here](#). It is important to note that the CDC has not included boosters to its definition of "fully vaccinated."

Thank you for taking the time to read this memo. Any questions about COVID-19 related leaves should be directed to benefits@palomar.edu. Be safe and be well!

Best,

David Joseph Montoya III
Assistant Superintendent/Vice-President, Human Resources