COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Temporary Personnel Memorandum

Overview

Since December 2019, when the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) learned of COVID-19, federal state, and local authorities have issued guidance on keeping communities and workplaces safe.

In response to this serious health threat and in compliance with state, federal, and local requirements and health directives, Caltech continues to take the measures outlined in this personnel memorandum to reduce the risk of infection on campus and in our off-campus locations. Also reference the Caltech Together website. Coronavirus Information

Updated On-Site Operations

Do not report to on-site work at campus or an off-site location if you are sick. If you start to feel sick while you are working, go home immediately.

In accordance with California’s modified COVID-19 workplace regulations, approved by the state’s workplace safety agency Cal/OSHA on Thursday, June 17, 2021, Caltech updated its physical distancing, building occupancy, health attestation, and face covering requirements, effective Monday, June 21, 2021. In addition, the surveillance testing process for undergraduate residents and community members who have not documented their fully vaccinated status with the Institute moved to a self-collection system with an in-house testing lab.

These policy changes reflect progress made in limiting the spread of COVID-19 through adherence to preventative health measures and extensive vaccination. While we remain mindful of the possibility of increasing rates of infection associated with new viral variants and susceptible populations, we believe that current conditions justify changes in some of our operating procedures.

Resumption of on-site work

The campus and offsite locations will be returning to full on-site operations by September 7, 2021. Throughout the summer managers will work with their employees to transition to on-site locations and to establish new operations models for each unit, department, and research group. Managers and supervisors should work with their administrative and divisional leadership to determine appropriate working arrangements for positions and roles within their area, keeping in mind that,

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as a residential research and learning community, Caltech relies upon in-person interactions for optimal operations. This may include a full return to on-site operations for some, while allowing for additional flexibility and a mix of on-site and remote work for others.

**Working on-site and Remote Work**

Remote work may not be appropriate for all positions or in all situations and it is not an entitlement or a Caltech-wide benefit. If a staff member is approved to work remotely, it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment.

Any remote working arrangement will be evaluated on a nondiscriminatory basis. The first six months of the arrangement will be on a trial basis and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the employee or Caltech. Every effort should be made to provide 30-days notice of such changes. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

All Caltech Policies, Personnel Memoranda, and Administrative Guidelines are applicable while a staff member is working remotely.

The operational needs of the department/division and Caltech shall be considered before a remote work arrangement is approved. An approved Remote Work Agreement is required when a staff member will be telecommuting for thirty days or more. Remote Work Agreements are typically approved for a renewable one-year period but may be for a shorter timeframe. Renewal of an agreement is not guaranteed.

Remote work may also be considered on a case-by-case basis as a reasonable accommodation for qualified employees with disabilities. Requests for an accommodation should be referred to the Disability and Leave Administration Unit (DLAU) in Human Resources, leaveunit@caltech.edu.

The location of the remote work assignment may affect the cost and availability of health and welfare benefits to the remote employee as well as their compensation.

Depending on the location of the remote work site location, an employee also may be subject to different/additional state or local taxes. Any such tax implications related to the remote work location are the responsibility of the remote employee, who should seek the advice of a tax professional.

Remote work is not provided as a replacement for child or adult care.

Please reference PM 11-5, “Remote Work”.

**Who Should Not Report to On-site Work**
Do not report to on-site work at campus or an off-site location if you are sick. If you start to feel sick while you are working, go home immediately. Contact your supervisor when you arrive home to inform them you are ill and have left work. Illnesses should be reported through the COVID-19 Reporting Application.

If you have any symptoms of illness (apart from those attributable to seasonal allergies or a diagnosed chronic medical condition), you should contact your health care provider for assistance and self-isolate or quarantine per your health care provider and/or public health department and Caltech guidelines. Employees with any of the symptoms listed below not attributable to a chronic condition diagnosed by a medical provider (e.g., allergies, migraines, chronic fatigue, etc.) or other known conditions, or who have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis are also asked to inform the Disability and Leave Administration Unit (DLAU).


Some of the symptoms may include:

- Fever (100°F/37.8°C or higher) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain not associated with exercise or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose not associated with seasonal allergies
- New gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, vomiting, nausea)

Anyone who has tested positive for, or been diagnosed with COVID-19, must be symptom free and meet all required protocols per state and local health department guidelines as well as Caltech policy before returning to campus.

If a supervisor receives a report that an employee is ill, they must require that the employee stay home. Supervisors should advise the employee to seek medical guidance. The supervisor must notify the DLAU for further guidance.

Affected employees should contact their manager and the DLAU for further information.

**Vaccination Confirmation and Surveillance Testing**

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Staff, faculty, and postdoctoral scholars are required to update their vaccination status either through the COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation application or DLAU. Individuals who provide proof of having received the COVID-19 vaccination and are fully vaccinated do not have to enter the surveillance testing program. In accordance with local, state, and federal health authorities’ guidance, the Institute will accept immunization records for all vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—currently, Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson—as well as those authorized for use by the World Health Organization (WHO). Employees should consult with Human Resources’ Employee and Organizational Development unit for more information.

All members of the community who are fully vaccinated but have not yet submitted documentation of immunization should do so immediately.

All employees and campus affiliates who have not verified their vaccination status with the Institute through the COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation application, will be required to participate in the Institute’s surveillance testing program. This requirement extends to all unvaccinated members of the community who report to campus, even on a part-time, occasional or intermittent basis.

Volunteers, guests, and visitors who have received the appropriate authorization from the cognizant division chair, administrative vice president, the provost, or the president to come to campus are to adhere to the posted rules and requirements. They are to provide verification of their vaccination status or participate in the Institute’s surveillance testing program. Please visit Caltech Together, the Caltech Coronavirus information website for guidance.

Sick Leave Policy

Caltech’s standard sick leave policy for benefit-based employees can be found in Personnel Memorandum 15-2, and for non-benefit based employees in Personnel Memorandum 15-8. An individual who is ill or is caring for a qualified family member who is ill, should use their accrued, unused sick leave and/or COVID-19 Supplemental Sick Pay, if applicable. If an employee chooses not to use their sick leave, they should charge time to vacation leave. Once sick and vacation leave is exhausted, employees will be moved to Leave Without Pay (LWOP).

Effective March 29, 2021, California updated its requirements for temporary COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave for large employers and expanded the basis for its use. The new requirements were retroactive to January 1, 2021 and extend through September 30, 2021. Caltech has updated its COVID-19 Supplemental Sick Pay for employees unable to work with the following expanded eligibility for use:

The employee:
• Is subject to a quarantine or isolation period related to COVID-19 as defined by an order or guidelines of the State Department of Public Health, the CDC, or a local health officer with jurisdiction over the workplace.

• Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.

• Is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis.

• Is attending an appointment to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, (Caltech will continue to allow you to charge this as regular time).

• Is experiencing symptoms related to a COVID-19 vaccine that prevent the employee from being able to work or telework.

• Is caring for a family member who is subject to a quarantine or isolation order or guidelines, or who has been advised to self-quarantine by a health care provider.

• Is caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed or otherwise unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

Additional information can be found at https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/2021-COVID-19-Supplemental-Paid-Sick-Leave.pdf. Employees or managers who are impacted should report their illness using the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting link on Caltech Access. Illness or exposures should be reported using the link Report an Illness or Exposure button.

For questions regarding current or retroactive cases, please contact the DLAU.

California’s requirement to provide COVID-19 Supplemental Sick Pay provides up to 80 hours of Supplemental Sick Pay for full time employees (prorated for part-time employees) and is a separate benefit from Caltech’s existing sick leave and vacation accruals.

**Excusing Employees from Work**

If a manager identifies an employee who is ill, they should direct them to stop working, even remotely. The Manager should contact DLAU or Student Wellness Services as soon as practicable for further instructions. For additional guidance, refer to the guidelines for management of reported illness here. COVID-related illnesses are to be reported through the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting tool on access.caltech.edu.

Employees who are ill should contact their primary-care physician and contact their supervisor and the DLAU. COVID-related illnesses are to be reported through the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting tool on access.caltech.edu.

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Managers must follow the Institute’s guidelines regarding nondiscrimination as outlined in the Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity policy. Managers should pay particular attention to employee confidentiality. Any health information an employee provides should not be shared with other employees except as provided above.

Managers should contact the DLAU (leaveunit@caltech.edu) to inform them of employees who have been instructed to not report to work due to respiratory illness. The DLAU will record the names of employees who have been excused from work and will work with departments regarding appropriate time reporting, leave usage, and duration of time away.

Staff members who have been instructed to return to work on-site and have concerns about doing so due to: (1) their age or a medical condition that places them in a higher risk group; (2) those who are pregnant; or (3) those who wish to seek ADA Reasonable Accommodations related to returning to the workplace, should contact the DLAU for assistance at 626-395-3092.

Time Reporting

Absences for employees not reporting to work pursuant to this policy are considered to be excused absences.

Paid Leave Options

In addition to the supplemental sick time discussed in the section on “Sick Leave Policy”, accrued sick and vacation leave may be available to continue pay for individuals who are unable to work due to COVID related issues. For information about paid time off, please refer to Personnel Memorandum 15-2 for benefit-based employees and Personnel Memorandum 15-8 for non-benefit based employees, or contact the DLAU for assistance.

Work Rules

Fully vaccinated employees who have been working remotely may return to their onsite work locations. Access to onsite work locations is allowable in accordance with local public health requirements for worksites, and subject to discussion with and approval from an individual’s manager or supervisor. Human Resources also must verify that an individual’s vaccination status has been confirmed through the COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation application. Employees who have not updated their vaccination status will be considered unvaccinated and will be required to enter the surveillance testing program and wear a face covering indoors.

Health Attestation and Vaccination Verification

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Health Attestation
- While all members of the community are still required to check for symptoms of illness before reporting on-site, we no longer will ask everyone to complete the health attestation form or to record the building locations they visit each day.
- If an employee experiences symptoms of illness consistent with COVID-19, they must record their illness through the COVID-19 Reporting Application so that a member of Caltech’s Student Wellness Services team may follow up as appropriate.
- Individuals who are ill or experiencing symptoms of illness are not to come to campus or report for on-site work.

Verifying Vaccination Status
- Individuals are recognized by the Institute as being fully vaccinated only after they have submitted documentation of their vaccination through the COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation application and have received a scannable QR code to confirm their status.
- In accordance with local, state, and federal health authorities’ guidance, the Institute will accept immunization records for all vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—currently, Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson—as well as those authorized for use by the World Health Organization. Employees with questions should consult with Human Resources’ Employee and Organizational Development unit.
- The Institute plans to make vaccination mandatory, with some approved medical and religious exemptions, for all members of the community once the vaccines have been fully approved by the FDA.

Surveillance and Symptomatic COVID-19 Testing
- All employees and campus affiliates who have not verified their vaccination status with the Institute through the COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation application, will be required to participate in the Institute’s surveillance testing program. This requirement extends to all unvaccinated members of the community who report to campus, even on a part-time, occasional, or intermittent basis.

Face coverings
- Inddoors
  - Fully vaccinated employees will not be required to wear a face covering indoors, unless posted signage or rules for accessing a particular space state otherwise. Individuals are considered to be fully vaccinated once they are two weeks past the final shot in either a two-dose or single-dose vaccine series and they have submitted proof of vaccination through the Institute’s COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation application.
o All employees who have not documented their vaccination status with the Institute are considered unvaccinated and will be required to wear a face covering in all indoor environments. Caltech will provide all unvaccinated employees N95 masks, upon request, for voluntary use indoors.

o Unvaccinated community members and unvaccinated campus visitors are required to wear a face covering when accessing indoor public spaces—including dining, retail, and athletic facilities. The one exception is when individuals are eating.

o Fully vaccinated individuals who prefer to wear a face covering may continue to do so. We hope that all members of our community will show respect for different individual decisions.

- **Outdoors**
  o Everyone on campus, regardless of vaccination status, will be allowed to remove their face covering outdoors.

**Physical distancing**

- The Institute will not require individuals on campus to maintain six feet of physical distance or require the use of partitions or barriers between employees’ indoor workstations.

**Hygiene**

- Everyone is reminded to continue practicing preventative hygiene. Continue to wash your hands thoroughly and regularly clean workspaces.

**In-Person Meetings**

In-person meetings are allowed. The protocols around vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals are to be followed. Meeting organizers should also consider having a remote option available for individuals who have not yet fully returned to on-site work.

**Travel**

**Caltech-sponsored travel**

In accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s travel guidance, fully vaccinated employees who have documented their status with the Institute are allowed to participate in Institute-sponsored domestic and international travel.

Employees who have not submitted proof of their vaccination status must continue to seek approval from their respective administrative vice president, division chair, the provost, or the president before participating in any Institute-sponsored travel.

**Personal travel**

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In accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s travel guidance, fully vaccinated individuals are free to travel. Please remain vigilant in following all protocols for safe and healthy travel.

*Any exception to this policy for campus staff will require the approval of the Associate Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer or the Director for Human Resources at JPL, or their designee.*