



## COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Temporary Personnel Memorandum

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### **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 COVID-19 workplace regulations, approved by the state's workplace safety agency Cal/OSHA, Caltech updated its physical distancing, building occupancy, health attestation, and face covering requirements.

These policy changes reflect on-going efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 through adherence to preventative health measures and extensive vaccination. Caltech will continue to adhere to all applicable local, State and Federal requirements. All Caltech employees are expected to follow these requirements as well as related policies, guidelines and directives issued by Institute leadership. Please reference the [Caltech Together](#) website for the latest requirements.

### **Mandatory Vaccination Policy and Confirmation of Vaccine Status**

#### **Purpose**

Consistent with Caltech's policy to safeguard the safety and health of all members of the Caltech community, Caltech requires all students, faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and staff be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus. The decision to require that all employees and students be vaccinated is reflective of both a growing concern for the aggressive spread of COVID-19 variants and a recognition of our collective responsibility

to protect the health and well-being of all individuals in our community, especially those who are otherwise not able to protect themselves.

Research has demonstrated that the COVID-19 vaccines are the most effective means for controlling the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and, most importantly, in limiting the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death. This policy complies with all applicable laws and is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the California Department of Public Health, and the Pasadena Health Department.

This policy is applicable to all staff, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty, including those who work fully off-site or have a hybrid working arrangement. The vaccination policy for students is available at [Student Vaccination Policy](#).

All staff, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty on campus, at off-site facilities, and working fully remote/off-site, excluding JPL, were required by October 15, 2021, to either (1) confirm their full vaccination status by uploading proof of vaccination documentation to the COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation application, which is accessible via [access.caltech.edu](http://access.caltech.edu); or (2) have an HR- approved medical or religious exemption or deferral for medical considerations.

Employees may receive any of the COVID-19 vaccines that are licensed by the FDA or approved by the FDA under an Emergency Use Authorization. Employees will be permitted to take time off to receive vaccinations, without loss of pay. Employees should work with their managers to schedule appropriate time off to comply with this policy. Caltech will also reimburse employees the cost, if any, of getting vaccinated.

### **Reasonable Accommodation and Medical Deferral**

Employees in need of an exemption from this policy due to a medical reason, or because of a sincerely held religious belief, must request an accommodation to begin the interactive accommodation process. Caltech will engage in an interactive process to determine if a reasonable accommodation can be provided that does not create an undue hardship for Caltech and does not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others in the workplace or to the employee.

Employees may also request a deferral of vaccination based on medical considerations documented by a medical professional.

To request an accommodation or a deferral based on a medical reason, please contact the Disability and Leave Unit ([leaveunit@caltech.edu](mailto:leaveunit@caltech.edu)). To request an exemption based on a sincerely held religious belief, please contact the Employee and Organizational Development unit ([eod@caltech.edu](mailto:eod@caltech.edu)).

### **Procedures for Employees Who Have Not Confirmed They Are Fully Vaccinated**

Prior to October 15, 2021, any member of the community who had not officially documented their full vaccination status (defined as two weeks post their final vaccine dose) was required to follow all Institute protocols and procedures for unvaccinated individuals. These protocols remain applicable to any member of the community who has an approved exemption or deferral. Current protocols for individuals with an exemption or deferral include participation in the Institute's [surveillance testing program](#), the use of face coverings indoors (currently mandated for all individuals on campus), and physical distancing. Caltech may impose additional requirements as circumstances warrant.

Employees with questions about this vaccination policy should contact Human Resources.

### **Resumption of on-site work**

The campus and offsite locations began returning to full on-site operations on September 7, 2021. Throughout the summer managers worked 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 continue to work with their administrative and divisional leadership to determine appropriate working arrangements for positions and roles within their area, keeping in mind that, 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 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 are to be referred to the Disability and Leave Administration Unit (DLAU) in Human Resources, [leaveunit@caltech.edu](mailto: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).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that people with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home->

[patients.html](#))

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.

Unvaccinated individuals who have been exposed (identified as a close contact) of a positive COVID case must quarantine according public health instructions.

Fully vaccinated individuals who have been exposed (identified as a close contact) of a positive COVID case must monitor for symptoms but do not need to quarantine; they can engage in normal activities unless they become symptomatic, at which point they should get tested and isolate if positive.

Individuals who test positive must isolate and follow healthcare provider and public health instructions for clearance. 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.

### **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. 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).

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.

### **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](https://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](https://access.caltech.edu).

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](mailto: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) other medical considerations; 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**

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. Individuals must provide confirmation of full vaccination status or obtain an approved exemption or deferral regardless of whether they will be working remotely or on site.

## **Health Attestation and Vaccination Verification**

### 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.

## Surveillance and Symptomatic COVID-19 Testing

All employees and campus affiliates who had not verified their vaccination status with the Institute through the [COVID-19 Vaccination Documentation application](#), were required to participate in the Institute's surveillance testing program. This requirement extended to all unvaccinated members of the community who reported to campus, even on a part-time, occasional, or intermittent basis. After October 15, 2021, all employees must confirm that they are fully vaccinated or have an approved exemption.

### Indoors

- **All employees will be required to wear a face covering in all indoor environments, regardless of their vaccination status.** Caltech will provide all employees KN95 masks, upon request, for voluntary use indoors.

## 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

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 designees.*