

COVID-19 Testing Requirements for SNF/LTC

Effective September 17, 2022, the California State Public Health Officer rescinded routine COVID-19 testing requirements for healthcare workers who were exempt from the vaccination mandate due to medical reasons or religious beliefs; however, SNF workers remained subject to CMS requirements. As of September 23, 2022, CMS updated its guidance and no longer requires routine COVID-19 testing of SNF healthcare workers.

As of October 7, 2022, CMS and CDPH no longer require twice weekly routine diagnostic screening testing for COVID-19 for unvaccinated exempt Health Care Workers (HCW) and booster-eligible HCW who have not yet received their booster in long-term care settings.

Below are highlights of the changes, but please refer to the CDPH and CMS resources below for full guidance and requirements. You will notice that CDPH still requires testing for new admissions or those who have left the facility for more than 24 hours and CMS does not include that requirement. Facilities in CA will be held to the stricter guidance from CDPH.

CMS TESTING SUMMARY FOR STAFF AND RESIDENTS:

Table 1: Testing Summary

Testing Trigger	Staff	Residents
Symptomatic individual identified	Staff, regardless of vaccination status, with signs or symptoms must be tested.	Residents, regardless of vaccination status, with signs or symptoms must be tested.
Newly identified COVID-19 positive staff or resident in a facility that can identify close contacts	Test all staff, regardless of vaccination status, that had a higher-risk exposure with a COVID-19 positive individual.	Test all residents, regardless of vaccination status, that had close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual.
Newly identified COVID-19 positive staff or resident in a facility that is unable to identify close contacts	Test all staff, regardless of vaccination status, facility-wide or at a group level if staff are assigned to a specific location where the new case occurred (e.g., unit, floor, or other specific area(s) of the facility).	Test all residents, regardless of vaccination status, facility-wide or at a group level (e.g., unit, floor, or other specific area(s) of the facility).
Routine testing	<i>Not generally recommended</i>	Not generally recommended

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CDPH UPDATED RESIDENTS TESTING

Newly admitted and readmitted residents are subject to the following:

- Newly admitted residents and residents who have left the facility for >24 hours, **regardless of vaccination status**, should have a series of three viral tests for SARS-COV-2 infection: immediately upon admission and, if negative, again at 3 days and 5 days after their admission.
- **Quarantine is not required** for newly admitted and readmitted residents, **regardless of vaccination status**.
- Testing and quarantine are **not required** for hospitalized residents who tested positive for COVID-19 and met criteria for discontinuation of isolation and precautions prior to SNF admission or readmission and are within 30 days of their infection.

Facilities should maintain capacity at their worksite, to continue to test as recommended during outbreaks and in the event it is required again at a future date.

Sources:

CDPH: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-22-13.aspx>;
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Health-Care-Worker-Vaccine-Requirement.aspx>

CMS: [Ref: QSO-20-38-NH REVISED 09/23/2022 \(cms.gov\)](#)