



Cal/OSHA Revised COVID-19 Standard to be Effective January 14, 2022

At its December 16, 2021 meeting, the Cal/OSHA Standards Board updated workplace COVID rules when it adopted a revised [COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard \(ETS\)](#) to be **effective January 14, 2022**. Notable updates include a revised definition of acceptable face coverings and "close contact" protocols for asymptomatic vaccinated employees.

1. Acceptable face coverings are now limited to surgical masks, medical procedure masks, voluntarily-worn respirators, or other materials consisting of, at least, two-layers through which light does not pass. **This means that many of the cloth masks that have been used by employees will no longer be acceptable under this new standard.**
2. Employers are now required to make COVID-19 testing available at no cost and during paid time to fully vaccinated asymptomatic employees exposed to a *"close contact."
3. Fully vaccinated asymptomatic employees exposed to a "close contact" must wear a mask and social distance in the workplace for 14 days following the last date of *"close contact".

See the [Cal/OSHA Fact Sheet](#) for more on what's changed and what is staying the same.

*"Close contact" means being within six feet of a COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or greater in any 24-hour period within or overlapping with the "high-risk exposure period".

Note: The California ETS does not mandate vaccinations or set forth a requirement to test in lieu of vaccination. Cal/OSHA has indicated that it will evaluate separately how to respond to a federal OSHA requirement for vaccinations in the workplace.