



## Safe Return to the Office Frequently Asked Questions

Here are answers to some of the questions employees have asked about COVID health and safety protocols. For more details, refer to [COVID Employee FAQs](#).

### Masks and Social Distancing

#### Are social distancing requirements still in place?

While physical distancing is no longer legally required, and there are no capacity limitations due to COVID-19, it is still considered a public health best practice. Everyone can distance as they see appropriate.

#### Are masks required even if I'm vaccinated?

Yes. The City of Oakland requires everyone to wear a mask indoors, regardless of vaccination status. According to the California Department of Public Health, masks remain a critical component of our multi-layered approach for protection against COVID-19 infection—especially those that offer the best fit and filtration (e.g., N95s, KN95s, KF94s).

In California, effective March 1, [masks are strongly recommended, but not required](#), for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in most indoor public settings. The [Alameda County Public Health Department](#) has aligned with this guidance and is encouraging all institutions and businesses to consider how best to support the wellbeing of their employees and patrons with masking and other policies. The City of Oakland can impose stricter masking requirements than what is currently required by state or local public health authorities.

Accordingly, and in alignment with the California Department of Public Health's [strong recommendation](#) that all persons, regardless of vaccine status, continue indoor masking, the City of Oakland has elected to require all employees and patrons, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask inside City facilities to protect the health and well-being of our employees and visitors. City employees are no longer required to wear a mask outdoors. Please refer to the [City's face-covering guidelines](#) for more details.

### **What should I do if a member of the public isn't wearing a mask? What if they refuse to wear one even when asked?**

If someone is not wearing a mask, you can say, "I see you don't have a mask. We have one here for you—just ask the security guard at the entrance who can provide you with one and then I'm happy to assist you." You can let them know that for everyone's health and safety, the City is requiring everyone to wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. If they still refuse, you can let them know you would be happy to help them once they put a mask on, and if they are unwilling, politely ask them to leave, letting them know they can come back when they have a mask on.

## **City Facilities and Vehicles**

### **Are there any capacity restrictions in City buildings? What about conference rooms? Elevators?**

While physical distancing is no longer legally required, and there are no capacity limitations due to COVID-19, including in buildings or conference rooms, it is still considered a public health best practice. Everyone can distance as they see appropriate. Generally elevators should be limited to no more than two people at a time.

### **Am I required to take my temperature before leaving home and when I enter the building?**

Citywide temperature checks are not mandated at this time. However, employees should continue to conduct Health Checks as directed by their Department and Supervisors. Such checks will vary by classification and assignment. Additionally, although not required, it is good practice to use the self-screening temperature check device when you enter a building.

If you are sick, or are experiencing any COVID-like symptoms, stay home. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), "People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea. This list does not include all possible symptoms."

### **If I don't have a private office, can I eat and drink at my desk without my mask?**

Yes, as long as you remain seated at your desk and replace your mask when you are done eating or drinking.

### **What am I required to do to keep City vehicles clean?**

All employees should clean and disinfect their vehicles before and after use to ensure their own personal COVID-19 safety and to promote COVID-19 safety for others. Departments will provide required cleaning supplies and equipment.

### **What if my access badge doesn't work?**

If you experience trouble using your access badge or need a new one, contact the Building Management Office at ext. 3219 or at [CServiceRequests@oaklandca.gov](mailto:CServiceRequests@oaklandca.gov).

### **Will all City buildings be open and all City services be available starting March 28?**

On March 28, 2022, employees who have been working remotely are returning to the Civic Center Plaza buildings (150 and 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza and City Hall) according to new telecommute schedules. We will welcome the public back to our Civic Center Plaza buildings in the near future, but no date has been set.

## **Supplies & Equipment**

### **Is PPE available to employees?**

You are required to wear a face covering indoors. If your Department requires you to wear a face shield, N95 mask, gloves, or other required personal protective equipment (PPE), the City will provide these items for you to wear while working.

### **My desktop computer doesn't have a camera or microphone to use for online meetings like Teams or Zoom. How do I order these?**

Ask your supervisor or administrative staff in your department to order the equipment you need.

### **Going out for Lunch and Not Sure Where to Eat?**

For an up-to-date directory of downtown eateries, visit Oakland Central at: <https://oaklandcentral.com/places/category/restaurants/>

## **COVID Protocols**

### **What should I do if I feel sick or have been infected with COVID?**

If you suspect that you have been infected with COVID-19, you are required to stay home to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19. If you experience COVID-19 symptoms:

- Contact your supervisor to inform them that you will not be reporting to work or are unable to telecommute. You can use your accrued paid time off or Emergency Paid Sick Leave, if eligible.
- Alert your doctor if you experience symptoms or have questions about your symptoms.

## **Where can I get tested if I've been exposed or I'm experiencing symptoms?**

COVID-19 testing is free and available to all City employees at CityHealth, open 7 days a week from 9am —5pm at 1300 Clay Street, suite 165.

## **What should I do if I test positive for COVID-19?**

- Contact your personal doctor immediately for further guidance.
- Notify Risk Management and your Single Point of Contact (SPOC) can guide you through City leave policies.
- Remain under home isolation and follow the recommendation of your physician until you are cleared to return to work.
- The City will comply with California's confidentiality laws and will not disclose your identity unless required by a California County Health Department or compelled by law.

## **What is the process when a City employee tests positive for COVID?**

The City will conduct an internal exposure investigation and take additional actions as directed by the Alameda County Public Health Department. If a City employee reports to a worksite, then later tests positive for COVID-19, the City and Risk Management or designated Department Infection Control Officer (DICO) will investigate and trace the employee's steps at the workplace to identify other employees who may have had "close contact" with the COVID-19 positive employee. The City will assess across Departments to identify everyone who may have been exposed. The City relies on the Cal/OSHA definition of "close contact," which is being within six feet of a COVID-19 positive individual for a cumulative total of fifteen (15) minutes or greater in any 24-hour period.

Exposed employees identified through the exposure investigation will receive an individualized communication from Risk Management or the DICO with specific instructions, typically within the same workday but not more than 24 hours after notice.

If an employee did not receive an exposure notice from Risk Management or a DICO, that means they were not identified as a close contact of the COVID-19 positive employee. Even so, employees who remain concerned about their COVID-19 status should contact their personal physician or take advantage of City-funded COVID-19 testing.