



San Francisco Department of Public Health

January 14, 2022

The Health Officer revised the COVID-19 Testing Order (No. [C19-15](#)) on January 13th, this applies to large health care providers, such as acute care hospitals and other hospital-related affiliates with operations in San Francisco provide tests to people who have COVID-19 symptoms or a close contact with someone with COVID-19. Those hospitals and hospital-related affiliates must provide the tests to people who qualify within one day of when they seek the tests and provide the test results within two days.

The Health Officer is updating the Order in response to the Omicron surge. The changes become operational immediately, and the first reporting deadline is Tuesday, January 18th.

Summary of main changes

- Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facility. The Order covers any Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facility located in the City that provides healthcare services and that is any of the following:
 - An acute care hospital, including but not limited to an emergency room, any inpatient units, and any on-site ambulatory care clinics; or
 - A clinic, office, or urgent care facility located in the City that is owned, directly or indirectly, by any entity (non-profit, religious, governmental, for-profit, or otherwise) that also owns and operates an acute care hospital, regardless of whether that acute care hospital is located outside the City.
- Tests. The required tests for COVID-19 can be PCR or antigen tests.

People who Qualify for Testing. People with one or more COVID-19 symptoms or who have had a close contact with someone who has COVID-19 qualify for testing if: (1) they are a patient of the Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facility (or member of the associated health maintenance organization/HMO), or (2) the Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facility at that location routinely accepts walk-in or new patients or (3) the location provides urgent or emergency care and the person seeking care meets the standard criteria for being seen at that location.

- Testing Availability Timeframe. The Order requires each Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facility in San Francisco to conduct testing for SARS-CoV-2 by the next calendar day (or the next business day in some situations) for people who qualify and who seek testing at a qualified location as described above.
- Test Result Timeframe. Each Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facility providing required testing under this order must provide test results to such people by the end of the second day after taking the test.
- Reporting Requirement. Each Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facility that is subject to the testing requirements must track daily testing data and, beginning Tuesday, January 18, 2022, report that data two times each week to the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

Health. The report must be submitted by email using a template that DPH is making available online via a weblink included in the order.

- Required 90% Thresholds. The Order requires such Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facilities demonstrate that for each reporting period it has provided tests to 90% of the people with COVID-19 symptoms or close contacts who seek testing, by the next calendar day (or business day in some situations), and any Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facility that does not meet the 90% testing threshold must explain the steps it is taking to reach that threshold. Similarly, the Order requires Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facilities demonstrate that for each reporting period it has provided test results to 90% of the people with COVID-19 symptoms or close contacts by the end of the second day after they took the test, and any Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facility that does not meet the 90% testing threshold must explain the steps it is taking to reach that threshold.
- Notice to Patients. Hospital-Affiliated Healthcare Facilities must notify their patients through websites or online patient portals, and when feasible through signs in patient care areas, of the availability of such testing.
- Recommendation Not to Use Emergency Rooms. The Health Officer strong urges everyone (including those with COVID-19 symptoms or who have had close contacts) not to go to a hospital emergency room or other emergency department of any facility simply to seek testing (as opposed to emergency medical care).
- Recommendation for Other Facilities to Test People With COVID-19 Symptoms or Close Contact. The Order also strongly encourages all other providers of healthcare to provide as much testing as possible during the current surge, prioritizing people who have one or more COVID-19 symptoms or a close contact.