

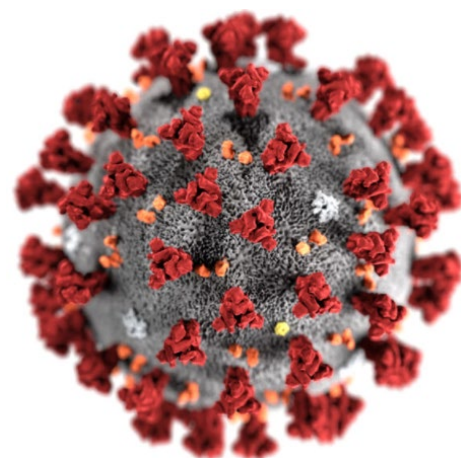
COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions

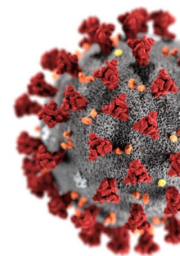
The pandemic has created a rapidly changing environment in terms of safety protocols that people must follow both in public and in the workplace. The following is provided to better explain the recommendations, expectations and mandates required by Public Health and the latest Cal/OSHA requirements that are applicable at Valley Water. If you have any questions about these FAQs, please contact Larry Lopez, EH&S Manager, at (831) 801-3101.

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Vaccines



The recently adopted Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standard requires employers to inform their employees that COVID-19 vaccinations, with Emergency Use Authorization, are effective at preventing COVID-19, and protecting against both transmission and serious illness or death.

Will Valley Water mandate the COVID-19 vaccine for all employees?

Valley Water highly encourages all employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccination; however, Valley Water, currently, is not mandating employees receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

How many Valley Water employees are vaccinated?

The current data indicates that approximately 77% of Valley Water regular employees are fully vaccinated.

Why do I need to tell Valley Water my vaccination status?

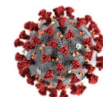
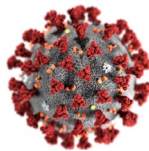
Employers knowing their employees' vaccination status is a State mandate. The reason employers need to know the vaccination status of their employees is because the latest Public Health Order, and the revised Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standard, has, to some degree, separate requirements for vaccinated versus unvaccinated employees. For example, the face covering requirements are different and work-related travel restrictions are different. Employers in Santa Clara County are required by the Public Health Order to ascertain their employees' vaccination status. As such, the order requires that employees provide their status to their employer upon request, and if the employee is not vaccinated, or declines to state their vaccination status, or is not fully vaccinated, the employee must provide the employer with an updated status every 14 days until the Order is rescinded. Additionally, Cal/OSHA requires that employees provide their vaccination status to their employers as well, for the purpose of enforcing the mandated requirements specific to the applicable vaccine status.

Why do I need to use Valley Water's COVID Vaccination Status App to inform Valley Water of my vaccination status?

Valley Water has developed a mandated administrative process for meeting the requirements of both the Public Health Order and the Cal/OSHA revised COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standard. The Vaccination Status App provides Administration staff, tasked with documenting employee vaccination status, with a central tool that ensures accuracy, timeliness of updating status, and provides ease of reporting capabilities as required. Bottom line, the use of the Vaccination Status App is required per Valley Water mandate to assist Valley Water in meeting its regulatory obligations.

What if I refuse to tell Valley Water my vaccination status by using the COVID Vaccination Status App?

The use of the COVID Vaccination App is mandatory. As such, all employees are required to answer the survey questions in the COVID Vaccination App, initially as requested, and every 14 days, if required, to further update your status. You will be notified if you are required to provide an update. Those not following the mandated use of the COVID Vaccination App may be subject to disciplinary action, per the applicable MOU's disciplinary action process.



Is Valley Water required to report my vaccination status to the County or the State?

No. Valley Water does not report its employees' vaccination status to any governmental agency. The requirement for employers to ascertain their employees' vaccination status is to ensure the employer can enforce the applicable regulatory requirements that differentiate between vaccinated and unvaccinated status. Only those staff that are involved in the administration of the information gathering process, or those that are required to enforce the regulatory requirements, are provided with information on employee vaccination status.

Will unvaccinated employees have a physical, visual indicator displaying that they are not fully vaccinated, and if not, how will the fully vaccinated employees be differentiated from unvaccinated?

There will be no visual differentiation that a person is either vaccinated or unvaccinated. Those that are unvaccinated, decline to state their vaccination status, or are partially vaccinated are required to wear a face covering while indoors. Keep in mind that vaccinated employees may choose to wear a face covering, at will, for their own protection; therefore, seeing a face covering on an employee is not a good indicator of an employee's vaccination status.

Valley Water management has solicited the vaccination status from all employees. If an employee declines to state their vaccination status, or while they are partially vaccinated, they are to be treated as unvaccinated. Managers and supervisors are provided with the names of their employees that are to be treated as unvaccinated.

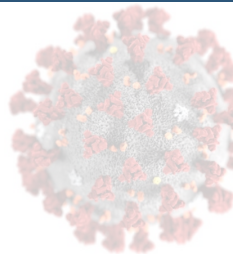
Can I use Valley Water time to get vaccinated?

Yes. Valley Water highly encourages you to receive the vaccination. All Valley Water regular employees can use up to two hours per visit (total of 4 hours for a two-shot vaccine) to be vaccinated. Please coordinate your vaccination schedule with your manager or supervisor, as applicable. Call the Benefits Hotline at x3030 for questions regarding charge coding. Free vaccination sites can be found on the following webpage: <https://covid19.sccgov.org/covid-19-vaccine-information>

What is the definition of “fully vaccinated”?

“Fully vaccinated” means the employer has documented that the person received, at least 14 days prior, either the second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccines must be FDA approved; have an emergency use authorization from the FDA; or, for persons fully vaccinated outside the United States, be listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Testing



Are we still being asked to get frequent COVID-19 testing?

Regardless of vaccination availability and total number of COVID-19 cases, people who exhibit symptoms consistent with novel coronavirus infection — cough, fever, congestion, fatigue, headache, loss of sense of smell, to name a few — should continue to get tested.

The same is true for those who suspect that they've been exposed to someone with the disease, even if they themselves have been vaccinated or previously had COVID-19. It is also recommended that those that are unvaccinated get tested at least monthly, and Santa Clara County Public Health strongly encourages unvaccinated employees to receive tests as frequently as weekly, even if no exposure or symptoms occur. Valley Water still allows employees 2 hours/month, through July 31, 2021, to seek COVID-19 testing and you are encouraged to do so. Testing can be through your health care provider or free testing sites in Santa Clara County can be found at the following webpage:

<https://covid19.sccgov.org/covid-19-testing>

Face Coverings



What are the current face covering requirements while at work?

As of June 17, 2021, fully vaccinated employees are not required to wear a face covering under any circumstances, unless notified by their employer that they are subject to an outbreak, or required based on other circumstances, such as an employee being identified as participating in a high-risk activity for contracting COVID-19.

Employees that are not fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, or decline to state their vaccination status must wear face coverings while indoors, including in open cubicles, and in vehicles with others. Employers are required to provide employees who are not fully vaccinated with face coverings of at least 2 layers or more and ensure they are worn over the nose and mouth when indoors, in vehicles and when required by orders from the California Department of Public Health. Outdoors, no employees need to use face coverings, regardless of vaccination status, unless there is an outbreak as defined by the latest Cal/OSHA standard. Employees will be notified promptly if an outbreak occurs and rules change. Unvaccinated employees are encouraged to wear a face covering outdoors when within 6 feet of others. Employers must also provide face coverings to employees upon request, regardless of their vaccination status.

Exceptions include: when an employee is alone in a room with the door closed or alone in a vehicle, while eating or drinking provided employees are six feet apart or outside, employees wearing respirators, employees who cannot wear face coverings due to a medical or mental health condition or disability or who are hearing-impaired or communicating with a hearing-impaired person, or when an employee performs specific tasks which cannot be performed with a face covering. Valley Water staff having medical concerns about wearing a protective face covering should inform their manager immediately to initiate an interactive Reasonable Accommodation process with Angelica Arellano, Employment Services Manager at 1 (408) 709-6225.

I work and meet with members of the public; do I need to wear a face covering when meeting with members of the public?

If you are unvaccinated, you will need to wear a face covering when meeting a customer indoors and if you are outdoors and within 6 feet of your customer, you are highly encouraged to wear a face covering. If you are fully vaccinated, you have a choice. If you, and the member of the public, are comfortable being within 6 feet of each other without wearing face coverings, then that is acceptable regardless if you are indoors or outdoors. If either one of you is uncomfortable, you should be prepared to don a face covering to provide good customer service.

What is the definition of a “face covering”?

“Face covering” means a surgical mask, a medical procedure mask, a respirator worn voluntarily, or a tightly woven fabric or non-woven material of at least two layers. A face covering has no visible holes or openings and must cover the nose and mouth. A face covering does not include a scarf, ski mask, balaclava, bandana, turtleneck, collar, or single layer of fabric.

Are the neck gaiters that Valley Water issued still o.k. to use?

No. The neck gaiters that were previously issued by Valley Water are no longer acceptable for use at Valley Water. The newly revised Cal/OSHA standard specifically states that single layer face coverings are not allowed, and the Cal/OSHA Consultation Office has confirmed that they are not allowed even if doubled up.

Can two or more unvaccinated employees who are gathered in a room together, without a vaccinated person present, take off their face coverings if they choose?

No. Unless an unvaccinated employee is in a room alone with the door closed, or in a vehicle alone, while eating or drinking 6 feet away from other or outdoors, they cannot remove their face covering while indoors, regardless of the vaccination status of other nearby employees.

Can employees, that do not wear face coverings when required, be disciplined?

Employees that are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, or declined to state vaccination status are notified of the face covering requirements and are expected to abide by the applicable requirements. Managers and supervisors have a list of their employees that are to be treated as unvaccinated and are expected to enforce the face covering rules. The face covering rule is a required Cal/OSHA requirement and is treated as any other health and safety regulation. If an employee violates a health and safety regulation, they are subject to progressive discipline as defined in the applicable MOU and Valley Water policy.

What if I suspect an employee is required to wear a face covering indoors and they are not?

Do not engage the employee. Do not ask their vaccination status or request them to don a face covering. Contact either your supervisor/manager, or the employee’s supervisor/manager and convey your concerns. The supervisor/manager will take the appropriate action to ensure verification of compliance.

May Valley Water require an employee to wear a face covering at work even if the employee provides documentation verifying that they are fully vaccinated?

Yes, employers can have policies that are stricter than those required by Cal/OSHA. However, an accommodation must be made for those who cannot wear face coverings due to a medical or mental health condition or disability, who are hearing-impaired or communicating with a hearing-impaired person, or when an employee performs specific tasks which cannot be performed with a face covering. Unless there is a change in COVID-19 case rates, Valley Water does not anticipate requiring those that are fully vaccinated to have to wear face coverings while indoors.

I'm unvaccinated, so with the very low COVID-19 case rates, why should I have to wear a face covering if I don't want to?

The reason Cal/OSHA and Public Health are requiring unvaccinated individuals to continue wearing face coverings indoors, and while riding with others in vehicles, is because, though face coverings have not been shown to provide absolute protection for the wearer, there is some evidence that face coverings can protect the wearer somewhat from contracting viruses in certain settings. Because the social distancing rules have been eliminated, this increases the risk of individuals encountering the virus. Those that are vaccinated are at a lower risk of contracting the virus than the unvaccinated, so face coverings are still required to protect the unvaccinated indoors where transmission is more likely.

Why are some unvaccinated employees wearing N95 respirators?

Cal/OSHA is encouraging the voluntary use of N95 respirators for use indoors and in vehicles by unvaccinated employees. Employers are required to offer, and provide N95 respirators, and the applicable training on their voluntary use, to those employees that request them for voluntary use. All unvaccinated employees have received communications to that effect and have been offered the use of N95 respirators for voluntary use. N95 respirators provide better protection against virus transmission for the wearer, so those that are unvaccinated are encouraged to wear an N95 while indoors and specifically when riding in vehicles with others.



What if an employee is not required to wear a face covering, but wishes to do so?

Employers must allow employees to wear face coverings if they voluntarily choose to do so, unless it would create a safety hazard, such as interfering with the safe operation of equipment. If you are fully vaccinated and want to wear a face covering, Valley Water will supply you with an approved face covering. If you wish to wear an N95 respirator for voluntary use, Valley Water will provide you with N95 respirators to use. Prior to being issued an N95 respirator, employees are required to receive a brief 15-minute training and complete a one-time signature verification indicating that the employee received and understands the training. For questions about N95 respirators, or to be issued an N95 respirator, please contact Jesse Ruiz, EH&S Specialist II at (831) 245-9601 or Andrea Uliana, EH&S Technician at (408) 705-7935.

What's the difference between an N95 respirator and a KN95 respirator and do they provide the same level of protection?

Most of the differences between these two respirators are small and would be uninteresting to the average mask user. N95s and KN95s are both rated to capture 95% of particles. The main difference is that the N95 is certified by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to meet their standards for use in health care and even surgical settings and KN95 masks are ultimately designed to do the same thing, but they do not meet the NIOSH standards for approval in the same settings. For protection against COVID-19, KN95 can be used for protection as they meet the definition of a "face covering."

Can I use a respirator that is NIOSH certified that has an exhalation valve?

Yes. According to Cal/OSHA, some approved filtering face pieces with exhalation valves, e.g., P100 and N100 masks with exhalation valves, initially were thought to create a higher risk for transmission of the virus. However, a recent study shows that most particles are not exhaled and are trapped inside the mask and valve and therefore are now allowed for use as a face covering for protection against COVID-19. The difference between these two filtering face piece respirators is that N100s filter at least 99.97% of airborne particles but are not resistant to oil. P100s filter at least 99.97% of airborne particles but are strongly resistant to oil. For use as a face covering for protection against COVID-19, either face covering is acceptable.

COVID-19 Case Response

What must Valley Water do to investigate and respond to a COVID-19 case?

Investigating and responding to a COVID-19 case in the workplace includes the following:

- Determining when the COVID-19 case was last in the workplace, and if possible, the date of testing and onset of symptoms.
- Determining which employees may have been exposed to COVID-19 through a close contact.
- Notifying employees, in writing, of any potential exposures within one business day (and notifying any other employer who has potentially exposed employees in the workplace).
- Make COVID-19 testing available to potentially exposed employees with a close contact at no cost and during working hours, with the exception of asymptomatic employees who were fully vaccinated before the close contact and—for a limited period—employees who recently recovered from COVID-19 and have not developed COVID-19 symptoms since returning to work.
- Exclude COVID-19 cases and exposed employees from the workplace until they are no longer an infection risk. Exposed employees who are fully vaccinated or who recently recovered from COVID-19 and have no symptoms do not need to be excluded.
- Investigate the exposure, whether workplace conditions could have contributed to the risk of exposure, and what corrections would reduce exposure.

What is a “close contact”?

An employee has had a close contact if they were 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.” This definition applies regardless of the use of face coverings.

What is the “high risk exposure period”?

For COVID-19 cases who develop COVID-19 symptoms, from two days before they first develop symptoms until 10 days after symptoms first appeared, and 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and symptoms have improved.

For persons who test positive but never develop COVID-19 symptoms, from two days before until ten days after the specimen for their first positive test for COVID-19 was collected.

COVID-19 Related Pay and Benefits

What timesheet codes should I use in PeopleSoft?

For COVID-19 related absences or increments of your workday where you are unable to work or telecommute due to the reasons included in the task code descriptions below.

If you take time off to take a COVID-19 test (through July 31, 2021):

- COVID-19 Project #60601013 may be used for up to 2 hours per month:
 - “Emergency Leave with Pay” (Time Reporting Code 45) - Task #1375

COVID-19 Related Absences (Should NOT be used unless approved by Benefits):

- “CA – SPSL” (Time Reporting Code 49) for the following absences:
 - Caring for Yourself: You are subject to quarantine or isolation period related to COVID-19 as defined by an order or guidelines of the California Department of Public Health, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or a local health officer with jurisdiction over the workplace, has been advised by a healthcare provider to quarantine, or is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis – Task #1370
 - Caring for a Family Member: You are caring for a family member who is subject to a COVID-19 quarantine or isolation period or has been advised by a healthcare provided to quarantine due to COVID-19 – Task #1371
 - Childcare: You are caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19 on the premises. – Task #1372

- Vaccine-Related: The covered employee is attending a vaccine appointment or cannot work or telework due to vaccine-related symptoms. – Task #1376

COVID-19 Vaccine Appointment (through July 31, 2021):

- COVID-19 Project #60601013 may be used for up to 2 hours per appointment, twice:
 - “Emergency Leave with Pay” (Time Reporting Code 45) - Task #1376

What is California Supplemental Paid Sick Leave (CA-SPSL)?

On March 19, 2021, Governor Newsom signed SB 95, legislation to ensure access to up to 80 hours of COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave (SPSL) for eligible employees, including those advised to quarantine or isolate and those caring for COVID-impacted family members. The new supplemental paid sick leave (SPSL) extends leave through September 30, 2021 and is retroactive to leave taken beginning January 1, 2021.

Am I eligible to take California Supplemental Paid Sick Leave

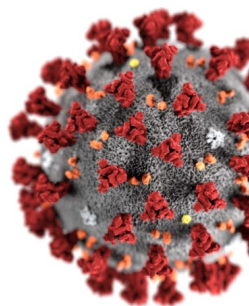
Eligible employees are those who cannot work or telework due to the reasons listed below. Eligible employees are entitled to paid sick leave that is in addition to leave that was provided under previous laws which expired on December 31, 2020.

- Caring for Yourself: You are subject to quarantine or isolation period related to COVID-19 as defined by an order or guidelines of the California Department of Public Health, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or a local health officer with jurisdiction over the workplace, has been advised by a healthcare provider to quarantine, or is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- Caring for a Family Member: You are caring for a family member who is subject to a COVID-19 quarantine or isolation period or has been advised by a healthcare provider to quarantine due to COVID-19.
- Childcare: You are caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19 on the premises.
- Vaccine-Related: The covered employee is attending a vaccine appointment or cannot work or telework due to vaccine-related symptoms.

To request CA-SPSL, please complete the COVID Leave Request Form and return it to Benefits.

How do I request California Supplemental Paid Sick Leave (CA-SPSL)?

You can request California Supplemental Paid Sick Leave (CA-SPSL) by completing the [COVID Leave Request Form](#) and returning it to Benefits or by contacting the Benefits hotline at (408) 630-3030 or EmployeeServices@valleywater.org.





Where can I get more information regarding the California Supplemental Paid Sick Leave (CA-SPSL)?

You can view the [California Supplement Paid Sick Leave Poster here](#). Or visit the State of California's Department of Industrial Relations' [California Supplemental Paid Sick Leave FAQs here](#).

Will I continue to accrue vacation and sick time?

Under the California's Supplemental Paid Sick Leave measure, employees that are eligible for Supplemental Paid Sick Leave (SPSL) can report on their timesheet and accrue vacation and sick leave for up to a maximum 80 hours.

Will I continue to accrue Valley Water service time?

Yes, time coded to "CA - SPSL" will receive Valley Water service time.

Will I continue to accrue CalPERS service time?

CalPERS has confirmed that any benefits paid are reportable as compensation to CalPERS. Payroll will continue to report all Emergency Leave with Pay to CalPERS as per their normal process. Should there be any changes, Valley Water will notify employees.

What happens to my benefits (medical, vision, dental, life insurance, short-term- and long-term disability, etc.)?

There will be not change or impact to your regular benefit coverages.

What happens after December 31, 2020?

The Families First Coronavirus Act (FFCRA) expired on December 31, 2020.

On March 19, 2021, Governor Newsom signed SB 95, legislation to ensure access to up to 80 hours of COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave (SPSL) for eligible employees, including those advised to quarantine or isolate and those caring for COVID-impacted family members. The new supplemental paid sick leave (SPSL) extends leave through September 30, 2021 and is retroactive to leave taken beginning January 1, 2021.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Please contact the Benefits hotline at (408) 630-3030 or EmployeeServices@valleywater.org.



Travel

Can more than one person now ride in a vehicle?

Yes, there are no restrictions on riding in vehicles with others. If you are unvaccinated and riding with at least one other person, you will need to wear a face covering, and you are highly encouraged to wear an N95 respirator which will be issued to you upon request.

Can I now schedule work-related travel?

Currently, Valley Water is following the recommendations of the Santa Clara County Public Health Department (Public Health) when it comes to work-related travel. As part of those recommendations, Public Health strongly urges businesses and governmental entities to prohibit all personnel, not fully vaccinated, from engaging in any work-related travel, especially travel greater than 150 miles from the county. Therefore, for unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, and those employees that decline to state their vaccination status, work-related travel is currently not allowed at Valley Water. The Public Health recommendations will be continuously monitored and updated when changes occur.

If you are fully vaccinated and you need to travel for work-related purposes, you should first check to see if the vendor/host is holding in-person sessions. If so, you can then request approval for travel per Valley Water's travel policies. When you travel by public transportation means, you are subject to follow the requirements of the Public Health Department and CDC.



If you are fully vaccinated, take the following steps to protect others when you travel:

During Travel

Wearing a mask over your nose and mouth is required on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and while indoors at U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. Travelers are not required to wear a mask in outdoor areas of a conveyance (like a ferry or top deck of a bus).'

Follow all state and local recommendations and requirements, including mask wearing and social distancing.

After Travel

Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms.

Follow all state and local recommendations or requirements.

You do NOT need to get tested or self-quarantine if you are fully vaccinated or have recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months, unless you develop symptoms.

Facility Restrictions

Is the Pondside Cafe serving food and can I eat inside?

Yes, the H.Q.'s cafeteria is open for regular business and you may eat inside. At this time, the configuration of the cafeteria is set-up to accommodate social distancing and if you are unvaccinated, you must maintain 6 feet of distance from others while eating without a face covering. If you are unvaccinated, you are still encouraged to eat outdoors, or you may consider somewhere other than the cafeteria that allows you to more easily maintain 6 feet of distance while you are eating and drinking without a face covering.



Do I still need to maintain 6 feet of distance between people?

No. The physical distancing requirement has been lifted for all locations. If you are unvaccinated, you are highly encouraged to maintain as much distance from others as feasible, but it is not required, other than when eating or drinking without a face covering.

Our work crews have been following staggered start times. Are we now allowed to have everyone start the shift at the same time?

Yes. Since the social distancing protocols are eliminated, regular start times for shifts may resume. Managers/supervisors may choose to continue staggered start times if operationally beneficial.

Are there any capacity restrictions on conference rooms or the Board rooms?

No. Since the social distancing protocols are eliminated, there are no limitations on capacity within conference rooms or the Board rooms. If you are unvaccinated, you will need to wear a face covering while in conference rooms with others. If you are alone in these rooms with the doors closed and unvaccinated, you may remove your face covering.

Will Valley Water continue with the enhanced janitorial cleaning schedule?

Currently, there are no immediate changes in our cleaning protocols; however, Valley Water is actively reviewing the CDC's most recent guidance for COVID-19 Employer Information for Office Buildings. The guidance indicates, when no people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 are known to have been in a space, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove virus that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility. Valley Water's enhanced cleaning provides for common area cleanings multiple times per day. Valley Water will assess a transitional process and timeline to provide for once a day cleaning.

Are Valley Water facilities open to the public now?

Technically, Valley Water facilities are not open to the public yet; however, for business purposes, non-Valley Water employees are allowed in our facilities upon unclassified manager approval. Visitors will be asked health screening questions and Valley Water must advise the visitors of the face covering rules for unvaccinated persons. Project managers, or designated Valley Water liaisons for the visitors, are responsible for ensuring the visitors have no symptoms of illness and to discuss with them the face covering requirements for unvaccinated persons. You should not ask about vaccination status. After discussions with the visitors, if you are uncomfortable with the visitors going without a face covering, you can request that they wear a face covering in our facilities.