



## CONTRA COSTA HEALTH

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### Contra Costa County Facility Masking Orders: Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Are there Contra Costa Health Officer orders that require masking when working in certain facilities?**

Yes, there are four Contra Costa Health Officer orders that require personnel to mask when working in certain facilities:

- The Contra Costa Health Officer order mandating the masking of personnel in skilled nursing facilities ([HO-COVID19-70](#))
- The Contra Costa Health Officer order mandating the masking of personnel in healthcare settings during the annual respiratory virus season ([HO-2023-1](#))
- The Contra Costa Health Officer [order](#) mandating influenza vaccination or masking of health care workers during influenza season
- The Contra Costa Health Officer [order](#) mandating influenza vaccination or masking of residential care facilities for the elderly staff members during influenza season

#### **Do staff still need to mask if they have received a COVID, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and/or influenza vaccine?**

Contra Costa Health continues to recommend that staff receive all vaccines that are recommended for the respiratory illness season. Everyone who is eligible to receive the COVID, RSV, and influenza vaccines is encouraged to do so, as vaccines can help protect both staff and patients/residents. However, all staff working in an acute care facility/hospital, dialysis center, infusion center, chemotherapy center, or skilled nursing facility (SNF), regardless of vaccination status, are required to mask when providing patient care or in patient care areas under the SNF staff masking order and the respiratory virus season masking order.

There are some facilities that only need to comply with the influenza vaccination or masking order but not the SNF or respiratory virus season order, such as residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFE). RCFE staff who have received a seasonal influenza vaccine would not be required to mask to comply with that order. RCFE staff who do not receive influenza vaccine would need to mask when in resident areas from November 1 through April 30 of the following year, or until they receive influenza vaccine.

**Who is required to wear a mask and when?**

The Contra Costa Health Officer masking order for skilled nursing facility personnel is effective year-round. It applies to employees, students, volunteers, contractors, and EMS personnel who are in a patient area or providing patient care. Although masking is recommended for others when inside skilled nursing facilities, these masking orders do not apply to patients or visitors.

The masking of personnel in health care settings during the respiratory virus season order and the influenza vaccination and masking orders for SNFs and RCFEs are all effective November 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year because the respiratory virus season masking order controls when there is conflict between masking orders. Staff would need to mask when providing patient care or when in patient areas.

The orders describe which staff need to mask and is summarized in the table below:

Order	Facilities	Staff Required to Mask When Providing Care or In a Patient Care Area	Masking Period	Order Duration
<a href="#">HO-2023-1</a> Respiratory Virus Season Masking Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acute Care Facilities (hospital that provides general acute physical or psychiatric care)</li> <li>Dialysis Centers</li> <li>Infusion Centers</li> <li>Chemotherapy Centers</li> <li>Skilled Nursing Facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees</li> <li>Students</li> <li>Volunteers</li> <li>Contractors</li> <li>Emergency Services Personnel</li> </ul>	November 1 through April 30 of following year	In effect until it is rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Contra Costa Health Officer
<a href="#">Influenza Vaccination or Masking of Health Care Workers</a>	All health care facilities licensed by the California Department of Public Health’s Licensing and Certification Division*	Staff who have not received influenza vaccine for the current season		
<a href="#">Influenza Vaccination or Masking of RCFE Staff</a>	Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (assisted living, board & care, or retirement home)	Staff in a resident area who have not received influenza vaccine for the current season		
<a href="#">HO-COVID19-70 Skilled Nursing Facility Masking Order</a>	Skilled Nursing Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees</li> <li>Students</li> <li>Volunteers</li> <li>Contractors</li> <li>Emergency Services Personnel</li> </ul>	Year-round	

**\*Which facilities need to comply with the Contra Costa County Health Officer influenza vaccination and masking of health care workers order?**

The Health Officer influenza vaccination and masking of health care workers order applies to all health care facilities in Contra Costa County that are licensed by the California Department of Public Health’s Licensing and Certification Division, including:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Acute psychiatric hospital            | Intermediate care facility                                       |
| Adult day health center               | Intermediate care facility—developmentally disabled              |
| Alternative birthing center           | Intermediate care facility—developmentally disabled—habilitative |
| Chemical dependency recovery hospital | Intermediate care facility—developmentally disabled—nursing      |
| Chronic dialysis clinic               | Pediatric day health respite care                                |
| Community clinic or free clinic       | Psychology clinic  |
| Congregate living health facility     | Referral agency  |
| Correctional treatment center         | Rehabilitation clinic  |
| District hospital with <100 beds      | Skilled nursing facility   |
| Emergency Medical Service Providers   | Special hospital   |
| General acute care hospital           | Surgical clinic  |
| Home health agency                    |  |
| Hospice                               |  |

**Where can I find more information about the Contra Costa County Health Officer respiratory virus season masking order?**

The Contra Costa Health Officer respiratory virus season masking order is available online in [\[English\]](#) and [\[Spanish\]](#).

**Where can I find more information about the Contra Costa County Health Officer influenza vaccination and masking orders?**

The Contra Costa Health Officer influenza vaccination or masking order for licensed health care facilities and EMS is available online in [\[English\]](#) and [\[Spanish\]](#).

The Contra Costa Health Officer influenza vaccination or masking order for residential care facilities for the elderly is available online in [\[English\]](#) and [\[Spanish\]](#).

**Where can I find more information about the Contra Costa County Health Officer order requiring year-round masking of skilled nursing facility personnel?**

There is a separate Health Officer order for skilled nursing facility employees to wear a well-fitting mask year-round until the order is rescinded. That order is available online in [\[English\]](#) and [\[Spanish\]](#).

**What kind of mask should be used to comply with these orders?**

A face mask that is well-fitted to an individual and covers the nose and mouth. Examples include but are not necessarily limited to N95, KN95, KF94, or surgical/procedure masks may be used. Guidance regarding well-fitted masks may be found at: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html). Please check with your facility about details of the implementation of the Health Officer masking order(s) that apply to your facility including specifications of type of mask.

## Questions About Influenza Vaccine and the Influenza Vaccination/Masking Orders

### **How is the influenza vaccination/masking order different from an influenza vaccination declination policy?**

State law currently requires that certain health care facilities offer influenza vaccination to employees. Employees that decline vaccination are only required to sign a declination statement. While compliance with this policy is high, influenza vaccination rates are not. Mandatory influenza vaccination or masking policies have increased health care worker (HCW) vaccination rates to greater than 95%. Influenza vaccination helps keep HCWs and patients healthy.

### **Can staff decline influenza vaccination based on a religious or medical exemption?**

Health care workers that decline influenza vaccine must wear a mask during influenza season while working in patient care areas.

### **What about staff who have egg allergy?**


Anyone aged 6 months or older should receive influenza vaccine. Egg allergy alone does not require additional safety measures for influenza vaccine beyond those recommended for any recipient of any vaccine, regardless of severity of previous reaction to egg. It is no longer recommended that certain people who have had an allergic reaction to egg should receive flu vaccine in a setting supervised by a health care provider who is able to recognize and manage severe allergic reactions. Any licensed, recommended influenza vaccine that is otherwise appropriate for the recipient's age and health status can be used. Please refer to the August 25, 2023 issue of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) for more information about influenza vaccine and egg allergy ([www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/rr/rr7202a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/rr/rr7202a1.htm)). If a HCW cannot receive influenza vaccine due to a medical condition, then they must wear a mask during influenza season while working in patient care areas.

### **Should staff who are immunocompromised or have a chronic health condition (asthma, diabetes, etc.) receive influenza vaccine?**

HCWs in these groups can benefit from influenza vaccination as they are at greater risk of severe influenza illness and complications. Any injectable influenza vaccine may be used. The live, intranasal vaccine should not be used in the immunocompromised. Please refer to the [August 25, 2023 issue of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) (MMWR) for more information about influenza vaccine and immunocompromised persons.

### **Should staff who are pregnant receive influenza vaccine?**

The influenza shot can and should be given to pregnant people during any trimester. Pregnant people and their newborn can benefit from influenza vaccination as both are at greater risk of severe influenza illness and complications. People who receive influenza vaccine during pregnancy can pass protection to their newborn. This is important because children under six months of age are too young to be vaccinated for influenza. By California law, pregnant people



should receive preservative-free influenza vaccine available as prefilled syringes and single dose vials.

**What kind of flu vaccine can staff receive?**

There are multiple flu vaccines available with varying age indications. An adjuvanted or high-dose influenza vaccine is preferred for persons 65 years of age and older but vaccination should not be delayed due to its unavailability. Instead, any influenza vaccine that is appropriate for the person’s age and health conditions should be given. Nasal spray vaccine is licensed for use in healthy, non-pregnant persons 2 through 49 years of age. HCWs who care for severely immunosuppressed patients who require a protective environment (*e.g.* bone marrow transplant unit) should receive the shot instead of the nasal spray. The Vaccine Information Statement for the [flu shot](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/flu.html) and [nasal spray vaccine](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/flulive.html) are available here:

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/flu.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/flu.html)

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/flulive.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/flulive.html)

**Which takes precedence, Contra Costa County’s Health Officer orders or state laws regarding masking and influenza?**

The Health Officer orders requiring masking when working in certain facilities are in addition to any state laws regarding masking, influenza, COVID, and HCWs. California Health and Safety code §120175 authorizes Health Officers to control contagious, infectious, or communicable disease and may “take measures as may be necessary” to prevent and control the spread of disease within their jurisdiction. Facilities must comply with the Health Officer orders as well as the applicable State laws regarding masking, influenza vaccine, and HCWs. For instance, as specified under State law, acute care hospitals in Contra Costa will still be required to report their HCW influenza vaccination rate to the California Department of Public Health, and they will also be required to implement this order.