



City of Boston Policy: Temporary COVID-19 Paid Leave for Testing and Vaccination

Amended Effective Date: March 3, 2021

Overview

As a community, all of us must do all we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To protect ourselves, our families, and our neighbors, we must continue to wear masks, stay socially distant, limit our interactions with people outside our homes, and stay away from others when we do not feel well.

One key part of stopping the spread of COVID-19 is testing. Boston has expanded access to testing, and we are now encouraging all residents who have interacted with persons outside their home to get tested. To curb the spread of COVID-19 and avoid rolling back our reopening, we need residents to get tested. Testing is important as it allows public health to determine how expansive the spread of this virus is. It is also important because those without symptoms may contribute to the spread of this virus through asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic spread. Getting tested regularly ensures that individuals will know if they are infected sooner. With this knowledge, infected individuals will be able to isolate sooner which will further reduce the spread of the virus, and ultimately save lives.

In addition, an important new step we should all take is getting a COVID-19 vaccination. By getting vaccinated we can help prevent COVID-19 from continuing to cause very serious illness and death, and we can help keep our families, friends, co-workers and fellow Bostonians safe and healthy.

Amount of Leave Allowed

To encourage and assist City of Boston employees in getting tested and appropriately vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, at this time the City is offering employees up to one (1) hour of paid leave during a workday in order to get tested and/or vaccinated. Employees may access this leave as follows:

For COVID-19 Testing: Once within every fourteen (14) days, whether or not the employee has been vaccinated; and

For COVID-19 Vaccination: For a two dose vaccination, twice within a forty (40) day period, at time intervals recommended by the vaccination manufacturer and/or

health care provider to accommodate the recommended interval between vaccination doses. For a one dose vaccination, once before expiration of this policy.

The policy with regard to testing leave is already in place. The policy with regard to vaccination will be effective beginning on March 3, 2021, at which time employees will be able to begin requesting paid leave for COVID-19 vaccination appointments beginning on March 3, 2021.

This complete policy will be effective until June 30, 2021. The City reserves the right to modify this date.

Who Is Eligible

All benefit-eligible employees - whether physically reporting to work, working remotely, or working a combination of both - are eligible for this leave. Employees are eligible for this leave even in their probationary period. Employees on extended leaves of absence or on suspension are not entitled to such leave.

Who Should Get Tested

The Boston Public Health Commission currently advises individuals who have interacted with persons outside their home to get tested, even if they don't have symptoms, but:

- **Especially** those experiencing COVID-like symptoms
- **Especially** those at high risk for complications from COVID-19
- **Especially** those who were in close contact with someone who is infected with COVID-19
- **Especially** those who have traveled or been in large gatherings

Notice and Documentation

In order to access this leave benefit employees must provide their supervisor/manager at least forty-eight (48) hours' notice and receive approval to use such leave. Existing departmental practices and policies governing how and to whom such notice should be given must be followed.

Employees are required to complete the attached [self-certification of COVID-19 vaccination form](#) or the [self-certification of COVID-19 testing form](#) and submit it to their HR Manager/Director or Personnel Officer at the time of their request.

All leave is subject to operational needs.

Employees working remotely and/or those rotating into physical work locations must schedule the vaccination appointments and testing on days and times they are working remotely.

Testing and Vaccination Locations

Employees who would like to take advantage of the voluntary testing benefit may schedule an appointment at one of the testing sites available across the City or in a nearby city or town. [View our map of testing sites in Boston for more details](#). If you live outside of Boston, or near a neighboring municipality, the State also has [a map of testing sites throughout Massachusetts that you are able to access](#). Please note this list is subject to change. For the most up to date information please refer to boston.gov.

The City's mobile testing sites are FREE to all, regardless of insurance coverage, and regardless of symptoms. Please reference the City's website since the sites move from week to week.

Employees can find a list of vaccination sites in Boston open for all eligible populations on the City's website [here](#). Please also refer to this page for more information about vaccine availability, effectiveness, and safety. If you live outside of Boston, or near a neighboring municipality, the State also maintains a map of vaccination sites throughout Massachusetts found [here](#).

Return to Work

After Testing: Employees who are asymptomatic and participate in testing are permitted to return to work while awaiting testing results.

Employees should immediately notify their supervisor and go home if they receive a notification that they are positive for COVID-19 while at work. If employees receive notice of a positive test while out of work, they should immediately notify their supervisor or human resources professional of the same and remain home and report back consistent with the [City's Return to Work Guidelines](#).

After Vaccination: Employees who are asymptomatic after vaccination should return to work for the remainder of their scheduled work hours.

Those Experiencing Symptoms, Side Effects or Adverse Events

Employees experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or any health-related side effects or adverse events after the receipt of COVID-19 vaccination that preclude them from working should remain home from work, contact their healthcare provider, and will be required to use their own time consistent with City policies. Such employees remain eligible to receive the one hour benefit for testing, but must follow the above protocols regarding notice and submission of the self-certification form. City employees who are front-line employees should contact their HR Director or Personnel Officer regarding screening and testing for front-line employees if they are experiencing symptoms.

The following temporary modifications to the City's Attendance Policy will be observed for employees who are absent due to symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or any health-related side effects or adverse events after COVID-19 vaccination and who provide medical documentation consistent with the City's Attendance Policy within five (5) working days of the employee's return work:

- Employees with insufficient sick leave will be permitted to use other leaves of absence such as personal, vacation and floating holidays with less than the forty-eight (48) hours notice;
- The consecutive absences covered by the doctor's note will be treated as one (1) instance; and
- Employees who have exhausted all leaves and fall into a sick no pay status may not be subject to discipline.

All other provisions of the City's attendance policy remain in full effect and employees continue to be required to follow call-in procedures.

NOTE: Nothing in this Policy prevents or discourages employees from receiving testing more frequently than once every 14 days, or from receiving vaccinations during non-work hours. Employees who have been exposed or believe they are at risk should consult with their healthcare provider and receive testing and vaccination as directed. This Policy is simply limited to the specified hours of paid leave during identified time periods for testing or vaccination. Employees requiring or seeking testing or vaccination on a more frequent or other scheduled basis may use other existing applicable leave benefits.