



Statement of the Public Employee Committee of the San Francisco Labor Council

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The Order of the San Francisco Public Health Officer, last updated September 10, 2021, requires all workers employed by the City and County to be fully vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus by November 1 or face possible termination.

As of October 1, the vaccination rates among the city workforce as a whole are over 90%, exceeding the vaccination rates in the general population. The city workforce now provides a strong protective barrier between the virus and the public we serve.

San Francisco's Public Health Order also allows for exemptions to vaccination for those with a valid medical reason or a strongly held religious belief that prevents them from receiving the vaccine. However, the Health Order does not provide guidance on how to accommodate workers with approved exemptions.

These reasonable exemptions are required by the Health Order and federal civil rights law, but they are meaningless if the city refuses to find an accommodation for approved exemptions.

We believe the city should follow the example of the San Francisco Unified School District by allowing workers with approved exemptions to stay at their jobs while masking and testing bi-weekly for Covid-19. This accommodation, combined with our now well-learned practices of social-distance, sanitation, and daily health checks, will provide co-workers and the public with a safe work environment, especially given our high vaccination rates today. City workers who are pending approval for an exemption should continue to work with masking and testing until they have completed the approval and accommodation process.

Additionally, in order to keep our members and the community safe the City must inspect and test our worksites for proper ventilation. We urge the City to heed the requests of our Unions and implement health and safety inspections at each worksite to ensure worksites have safe air flow and adequate ventilation systems.

We encourage all city workers to get vaccinated as the best way to stop this disease, but we also support meaningful exemptions and accommodations as required by law to keep our valuable workers on the job.

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*The **Public Employee Committee of the San Francisco Labor Council** brings together over 30,000 dedicated public service workers among 26 unions. Healthcare providers, firefighters, police officers, infrastructure & trades workers, engineers, planners, educators, social workers and others continue to answer the call to public service every day as Disaster Service Workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.*