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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: August 20, 2021 September 24, 2021 **October 12, 2021 REVISED January 3, 2022**

TO: Licensed Child Care Providers and Youth Camps

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: Coronavirus Memo #45 **REVISED**
Vaccination Requirement

September 24, 2021	Replaces EO 13D with EC 13G; added link to IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR EXECUTIVE ORDER 13G; Added requirement for program policy; Updated testing requirements; Provided detail on documents needed in licensing inspections; Confirmed that all OEC staff must be compliant to conduct inspections; Added requirement for signed declaration; Added exemptions information
October 12, 2021	Added information in the testing section regarding testing administered by a state licensed physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse or registered nurse* and processed and results reported by a state licensed clinical laboratory, pharmacy-based testing provider, or other healthcare provider facility with a current Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waiver. (*See note in memo.)
January 3, 2022	Updated allowable COVID-19 tests to include self-administered home tests for the period January 2 through January 17, 2022.

Governor Lamont issued Executive Order 13G on September 10, 2021, replacing Executive Order 13D, to require vaccines for individuals who work in child care settings (i.e., “covered workers”), including those who work in Office of Early Childhood (OEC) licensed child care centers, group child care homes, family child care homes, and licensed youth camps that operate during the school year; pre-K – 12 school employees and state employees. This requirement addresses the increasing prevalence of COVID-19 variants, infection and hospitalization rates, and that COVID-19 presents increased risk to children under 12 who cannot be vaccinated and people whose medical conditions reduce their immune response. The Department of Public Health has issued [Implementation Guidance For Executive Order 13G](#), to guide compliance with the Executive Order. This memo does not reiterate the entire Implementation Guidance and providers should consult the full document for detailed information.

Specifically as of September 27, 2021, all covered workers in licensed child care centers, group child care homes, family child care homes, and licensed youth camps operating during the school year must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or submit to COVID-19 testing once per week and provide proof of the test results on a weekly basis to the child care program administrator. Programs are required to implement a policy that requires covered workers who have not demonstrated proof of full COVID-19 vaccination to submit at least one test result for the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) every 7 days on an

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ongoing basis until fully vaccinated and to provide adequate proof of the results of the testing on a weekly basis. Programs must restrict access to their facilities for those individuals who fall out of compliance at any time with the requirements of the Order until the individual provides adequate proof of compliance.

This vaccine requirement applies to covered workers including all employees, both full and part-time, contract workers, providers, assistants, substitutes, and other individuals working in a child care facility or pre-K to grade 12 school, including individuals providing operational or custodial services or administrative support or any person whose job duties require them to make regular or frequent visits to schools or child care facilities or to have regular or frequent contact with children in child care, students, or staff. Covered worker does not include a contractor or employee of an outside vendor who visits a child care facility or pre-K through grade 12 school only to provide one-time or limited-duration repairs, services, or construction. This vaccine requirement does not apply to household members in licensed family child care homes, volunteers, or parents unless they fall into one of the categories of covered workers listed above.

This memo provides information on achieving and maintaining compliance with the vaccine requirement for covered workers in a licensed child care facility. The OEC provides additional details in [FAQs](#).

Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

Vaccines continue to be widely available, often without an appointment, through a variety of providers, pharmacies, and clinics. Please visit the [CT Vaccine Portal](#) to find an available vaccination site near you.

Testing

Covered workers who are not “fully vaccinated” (as defined by the Executive Order) by September 27, 2021 must test for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) at least weekly (i.e., at least one test every 7 days). A covered worker who is hired before September 27, 2021 may, as an alternative to vaccination, and regardless of whether the covered worker has a medical or religious exemption, choose to comply with the testing requirements contained in Section 4 of the Executive Order and any additional safety precautions imposed by the child care facility in lieu of being fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Covered workers hired on or after September 27, 2021 must have an approved exemption from vaccination in order to use weekly testing to comply with the order. In addition, weekly testing can be waived temporarily for those individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the prior 90-days either through a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result or other diagnostic criteria. A [Temporary Waiver from Weekly COVID-19 Testing](#) form must be completed and submitted to the relevant child care facility. See the DPH [Implementation Guidance For Executive Order 13G](#) for more details.

To comply with the testing requirement, testing must be in the form of either a molecular (e.g., PCR) or antigen SARS-CoV-2 test and must be administered and reported by a state licensed clinical laboratory, pharmacy-based testing provider, or other healthcare provider facility with a current Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waiver. If the sample is collected at a site other than one of these provider facilities, the testing must be administered by a state licensed physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse or registered nurse* and the processing of the test sample and reporting of the test results shall be conducted by a state licensed clinical laboratory, pharmacy-based testing provider, or other healthcare provider facility with a current Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waiver. For the purposes of this guidance, “administered” means that one of the health care professionals listed above either physically collects the sample themselves or observes the collection of the sample by the individual being tested (i.e., self-swab) or a third party. If the sample is

collected at a site other than the provider facility (e.g., at the workplace), the child care facility must keep documentation of the date and time of the sample collection, as well as the name, license number, and signature of the health care professional who administered each test.

For the period January 2, 2022 through January 17, 2022, the testing requirement is amended to temporarily allow for [self-reported and administered home testing](#). This temporary allowance is made in light of very high utilization of testing at this time. Staff who are unvaccinated must provide at minimum proof of a home test result to their program for each of the first two weeks of January. Following this period of time, home-based testing that is not directly **collected or** observed and verified by the signature of one of the health care professionals indicated above and processed and results reported by a laboratory or provider indicated above is not considered adequate proof of a SARS-CoV-2 test for the purposes of complying with the Executive Order.

Only test results submitted to the child care facility within 72 hours of the test administration date will be deemed compliant with the testing requirement.

*Note that a registered nurse is permitted to administer testing but is not one of the health care professionals authorized to sign any other forms required for compliance with Executive Order No. 13G.

Those individuals who need to be tested for COVID-19 will find information on locations at the [Connecticut COVID-19 Response](#) webpage. Testing locations are found by typing a zip code in the search box on the right side of the page.

Monitoring

The OEC will monitor licensed programs' compliance with the Governor's Order for vaccination or testing during licensing visits similarly to how the agency currently monitors health records. Depending on the number of staff, this may include a sampling of records. Programs shall maintain on site or readily available upon request verification of compliance with the vaccine or testing requirements for each staff as follows:

- 1) submitted proof of their status as fully vaccinated (as defined above); or
- 2) submitted proof of a single dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine and provided the date of a scheduled second dose appointment; or
- 3) requested and been granted a medical or religious/spiritual exemption from COVID-19 vaccination or was hired before September 27, 2021; and
- 4) if not fully vaccinated, submitted adequate proof of a negative test for SARS-CoV-2 in the prior 7 days, unless the individual has been granted a temporary testing waiver based upon a documented COVID-19 infection within the prior 90 days.

Additionally, child care facilities are responsible to require contractors who are not employed by the child care facility to positively affirm that their contract workers' are in compliance with the Executive Order.

Instances of noncompliance with the vaccine requirement will be cited and programs will be asked to submit a corrective action plan addressing the violation. Individuals not in compliance with the requirement will not be allowed on the premises of a licensed child care facility until compliance with the vaccine or testing requirement is met.

OEC staff are State employees who also must meet the order's requirements as of September 27, 2021. State employees must provide documentation (see proof of vaccination below) of their compliance to the state HR representative. Staff who are in the field performing inspections and delivering other services have been determined to meet the requirements in Executive Order No. 13G as verified in WellSpark COVID Navigator™ the States monitoring portal.

Acceptable Proof of Vaccination Requirement

Proof of vaccination must be maintained on site or readily available upon request and shall include one of the following:

- (1) Copy of a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card or photo of the Vaccination Record Card;
- (2) Documentation from a vaccine provider or electronic health care records;
- (3) A certificate from the Vaccine Administration Management System ("VAMS"); or
- (4) State Immunization Information record.

Any of these forms of proof of vaccination must be accompanied by a signed declaration of authenticity of vaccination record. This declaration may be [on the form provided by the State of CT](#) or on a form that collects the same information and that is complete and certified by the provider as appropriate.

Programs shall maintain proof of each weekly test result for covered workers who are not fully vaccinated.

Child care facilities need not maintain similar documentation for contract workers, but must require contractors to positively affirm that contract workers and their Contractors are in compliance with the provisions of the Executive Order prior to granting those workers access to their facilities. Such affirmation shall be maintained on site or be readily available upon request and may be documented on the [Contractor's Declaration](#) form provided by the State of CT.

[Medical Exemptions](#) from vaccination

Individuals who cannot receive COVID-19 vaccination because the administration of COVID-19 vaccine is likely to be detrimental to the individual's health must request an exemption from the Executive Order. Medical exemption forms must be signed by the individual's physician (MD or DO), physician's assistant (PA), or advance practice registered nurse (APRN) and submitted to the relevant child care facility for approval. Medical exemptions may be documented on the [form provided by the State of CT](#) or on a form prepared by the provider provided that, at a minimum, the medical exemption forms they use collect the same information and are completed and certified by designated healthcare providers.

[Religious or Spiritual Exemptions](#) from vaccination

Individuals who object to vaccination on the basis of a sincerely held religious or spiritual belief may request an exemption from the vaccination requirement in the Executive Order. Programs and providers should determine, in discussion with their Human Resources management and legal counsel if applicable, what process and information is appropriate and necessary for review in determining whether a request for a religious or spiritual exemption from COVID-19 vaccination submitted by a covered worker should be accepted or rejected. Exemptions may be documented on the form provided by the State of CT or on a form prepared by the provider. Exemption requests should be submitted to the relevant child care facility for approval.

Covered workers who have been granted an exemption from vaccination are required to comply with weekly testing. Consult the testing section of this memo for guidance on compliance for individuals granted exemptions from vaccination.