

Google is now requiring office workers to get weekly molecular COVID-19 tests



Google will require anyone going to one of its US offices or facilities to have received a negative molecular test for COVID-19, the company informed employees Thursday in a memo obtained by CNBC. Workers going to the office regularly will have to get tested weekly, chief health officer Karen DeSalvo said in the memo, and employees have been asked to report their vaccination status and wear surgical-grade masks indoors.

Google spokesperson Lora Lee Erickson confirmed to *The Verge* that a new temporary COVID-19 policy is now being implemented, one where “anyone accessing our sites in the US are expected to obtain a recent negative COVID-19 molecular test before coming onsite” and that it’s offering various kinds of tests at no cost.

Google offers at-home tests for employees

Google offers free at-home testing to full-time employees and

contract workers through BioIQ's PCR-based nasal swab tests, Erickson said, but *Bloomberg* reported this week that full-time employees also have access to molecular tests from Cue Health that can give results in just a few minutes. Contractors, on the other hand, are specifically being offered the mail-in BioIQ tests, according to a tweet from the Alphabet Workers Union, which means they must wait longer for a result. Erickson tells us that some Google contractors at the company's datacenters have access to rapid on-site testing using the Cue machines, though.

The changes arrive as COVID-19 cases have surged across the country and as the omicron variant spreads. These new policies add to Google's directive from December requiring employees to get vaccinated or risk being forced to take leave and eventually be fired. The company delayed its mandatory return to the office to some point this year in August.

This week, Meta also upped its health policies for employees, requiring anyone returning to its offices when they open at the end of March to have received a booster dose of a vaccine.

<https://www.theverge.com/2022/1/14/22884539/google-require-negative-molecular-test-covid-19-offices>