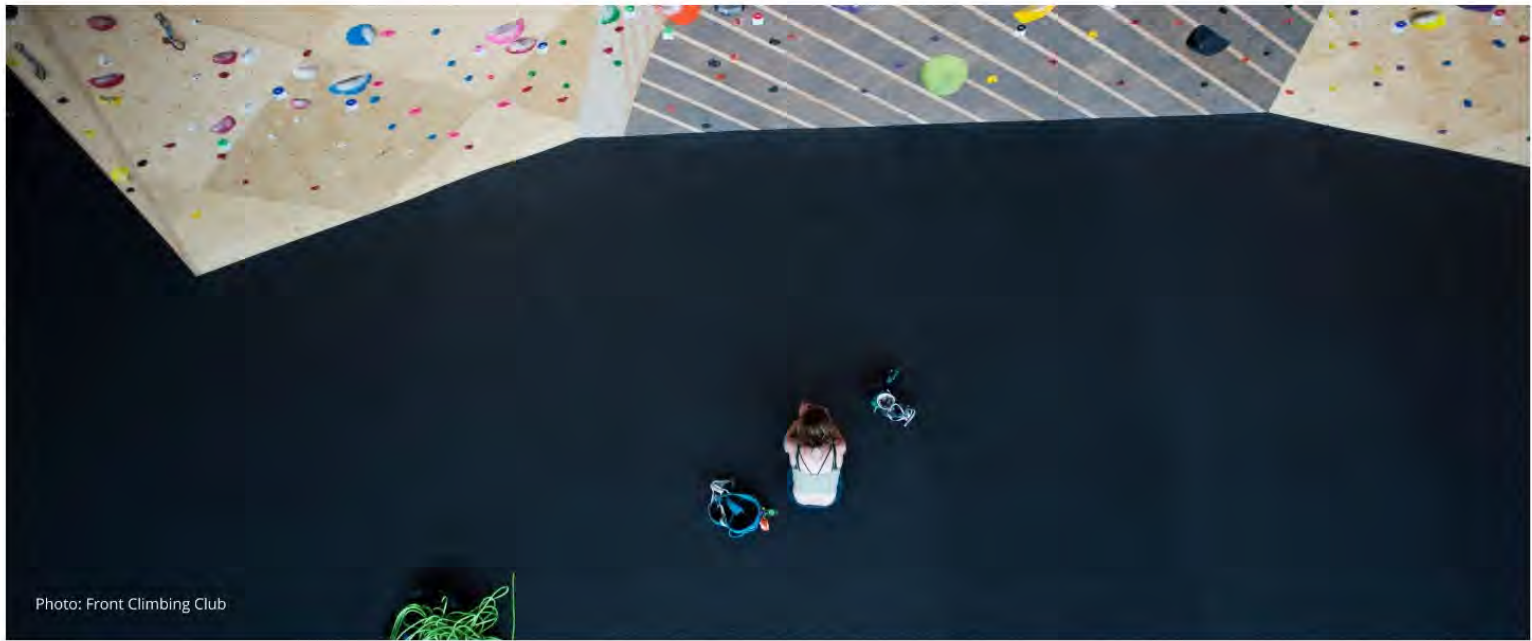


What To Expect From A Vaccine Mandate

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Posted By: **Staff** in [CWA Blog](#)



Vaccine requirements have arrived across the United States.

From Los Angeles to New York, municipalities are requiring gyms, restaurants, and other indoor venues to ask patrons to prove they've been vaccinated in order to receive services. This is inherently daunting for most businesses. It could be easy to spin a narrative of doom; mass boycotts by customers or refusals to work by staff.

Largely, thankfully, that has not happened. In terms of staff, mass quitting due to vaccine requirements haven't materialized. "...As soon as the cost of going unvaccinated stops being about statistics and becomes concrete — refuse the shot, lose your job — most vaccine resistance evaporates," [writes Paul Krugman in the New York Times](#). And in terms of customers, though businesses do and have faced backlash, they've also received positive inflections of patronage.

A café in Minneapolis reported social media comments [ripe with criticism while their business actually went up](#). In Boston, a bar owner saw locals embrace his business after he made the decision to require vaccinations to dine-in. Both businesses are located in municipalities that do not require vaccines to enter their facilities by law.

A Columbus, Ohio brewery similarly isn't required by law to have its staff vaccinated, [but ended up doing it anyway](#). They now have all 72 staff members vaccinated, including some that the order convinced. And despite online backlash, a pizza restaurant near Chapel Hill [is seeing business remain steady](#) with certain customers seeking them out independently.

These anecdotes from around the U.S. don't seem isolated, but rather imply a trend. They transcend all types of boundaries: rural vs. urban, political, and geographical.

The indoor climbing industry seems to be facing the same reactions

The indoor climbing industry seems to be facing the same reactions. MetroRock's two New York City locations fall under the city's ["Key to NYC" vaccine mandate](#). The gym, which has six locations in three states, manages each separately with its own policies related to COVID-19. According to Climbing Business Journal, [New York was the first city in the United States to implement such a law](#).

"We haven't gotten any backlash, and if anything people are psyched that it's happening," says Kasia Pietras, the director of operations and routesetting for MetroRock. This includes staff, who are all vaccinated as of now. Their policy even convinced some folks to get their shots.

MetroRock began enforcing their vaccine requirement ahead of the city of New York, which Pietras credits to their success so far. "It helped us get all of our ducks in order prior to [the city] fully mandating it."

As for social media, MetroRock turned off the comments on their social media post about the vaccine mandate with a statement that it was to control the spread of misinformation.

Pietras says it was a decision made by their marketing manager. "A lot of people have a lot of opinions...and social media can blow things out of proportion."

On the other side of the United States, Sender One has both its Los Angeles, Calif., locations and Orange County gyms falling under a vaccine requirement. It's only required by law in L.A., though.

Both gyms' social media posts regarding their vaccine mandates:

"It's very difficult to run a business with different policies at different gyms," says Alice Kao, CEO of Sender One. Across all locations, Kao says that only three of close to 120 employees left over the vaccine mandate.

A very small number of members canceled, and Kao decided she wanted to call them.

"I decided, and I took it on personally, to call some of these members." She did not call them to win them back, but to understand their perspective.

She recalls a conversation with one patron who had been a gym member for years **"After we had this conversation, he changed his attitude. He started thanking me."** She wasn't going to change her policy, or his mind - but she did want to have a conversation with people who disagreed with the policy.

“What can we do to be more compassionate? Isn’t that why we started a gym in the first place?”

Like Pietras, Kao has also gotten positive feedback. She has received emails from folks who are ready to return because of the policy change.

For management weighing options for vaccine requirements, Pietras recommends making sure that you have a system in place to record your customers' vaccination records so you don't have to ask twice.

“Luckily, we haven’t had anyone that has caused any issues at any of our facilities.”

On making the actual decision, Kao says to focus on what’s right for your community.

“We had to do it. After the last 18 months, anything we can do to make sure we don’t have to close again, we’ll do it.”

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About the Author



Jake Byk is the marketing coordinator for the Climbing Wall Association. He's an avid hiker, mountaineer, lover of hard-to-reach places and long drives. He's spent four years as a journalist, then a public lands advocate, documenting the Great Plains and Mountain West before joining the CWA.

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