



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) are intended to assist employees in understanding the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy. Please visit the [Human Resources COVID-19 webpage](#) for more COVID-19 related information and resources. FAQ's may be periodically updated with additional responses. If you have additional questions that are not answered in the below FAQs, please forward questions to the Department of Human Resources COVID Care Team at [HRCOVID19@nnva.gov](mailto:HRCOVID19@nnva.gov).

### **What are the policy requirements?**

You are encouraged to read the full [COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy](#). Employees are required to submit **documentation** of fully vaccinated status, proof of 1st dose, declination of vaccine, declination of disclosure or request for exemption/accommodation by September 1, 2021. Employees who decline the vaccine or decline disclosure of vaccination status will be subject to weekly testing tentatively beginning September 3, 2021. Employees who qualify for medical or religious exemptions from the vaccination or testing should submit either a Religious Exemption Request Form or a Medical Exemption Certification Form to the Department of Human Resources COVID Care Team. Employees may request an exemption and seek workplace accommodations without fear of retaliation. The city expects all employees to be fully compliant with this policy by September 30, 2021.

Employees who choose to remain unvaccinated or who do not wish to disclose their vaccination status, will be required to complete and submit a COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Declination Form no later than September 1, 2021 to the Department of Human Resources COVID Care Team and perform weekly COVID-19 testing at a testing facility. Weekly submission of COVID-19 test results are tentatively scheduled to begin on Friday, September 3, 2021. Subsequent test results must be uploaded by noon every Friday until further notice. Employees who remain unvaccinated or decline to disclose their vaccination status must also wear face coverings while entering and exiting all city buildings and facilities, as well as in all common areas or while representing the City on official business. ***(The CDC recommends that everyone, even those who are fully vaccinated, wear a mask indoors while around others who are not a part of their household. "Please Mask Up" signs have been placed in all city buildings and facilities).***

### **Where do I upload my documents and is the information I upload into the portal safe and secure?**

The uploading of an employee's vaccination information into the secure Human Resources Vaccine Documentation Portal is considered confidential medical information and will be maintained and regarded as such by the Department of Human Resources. The link to the Human Resources Vaccine Documentation Portal and step by step instructions can be found on the [Human Resources COVID-19 webpage](#).

**Who will have access to information on my vaccination status?**

As we approach the September 30, 2021 compliance deadline, there will be a business necessity for department heads and/or supervisors to be aware of an employee’s vaccine reporting status or approved exemption/accommodation result. This limited communication to city leadership will be necessary to enable departments to plan for a possible transition of duties, should an employee choose not to comply by the September 30, 2021 deadline. In this regard, such information will be communicated on a need to know basis.

**When does the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy become effective?**

The policy is effective August 12, 2021 and requires all employees and new hires to be fully vaccinated, decline the vaccine, decline reporting of vaccination status, or receive an approved exemption/accommodation on or before September 30, 2021.

**Who is covered by the policy?**

**ONLY** current City of Newport News employees (full-time, part-time, temporary) including interns, volunteers, temporary workers, contractors and newly hired employees in any of these statuses are required to comply with the policy.

**What are the exemptions to the mandatory vaccination reporting requirements policy?**

An employee may request an exemption due to a current or underlying medical condition; pregnancy or pregnancy-related medical condition; prior positive COVID test in the last 90 days; or a strongly held religious belief, observance, or practice. The required form and supporting documentation for requesting an exemption or accommodation is found on the [Human Resources COVID-19 webpage](#).

**When is an employee considered “fully vaccinated” as required by the policy?**

An employee is considered “fully vaccinated” two weeks after receiving either the single-dose vaccine or two weeks after the second dose of a two-dose vaccine. It takes two weeks after completion of the vaccination for antibodies to develop for disease resistance.

**Any special requirements for new hires?**

Individuals receiving offers of employment will be required to comply with the City’s COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy prior to the commencement of employment.

**Which vaccine must an employee receive to comply with the policy?**

An employee can receive either a single-dose vaccine such as Johnson & Johnson or a two-dose vaccine such as Moderna or Pfizer.

**Am I required to disclose my vaccination status if I work remotely or telework at times?**

Yes. Employees on approved telework schedules or who occasionally telework are also required to comply with the City’s COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy.

**What are the critical dates for compliance with the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy?**

All employees and new hires must be fully vaccinated, decline the vaccine, decline reporting of their vaccination status, or receive an approved exemption/accommodation on or before September 30, 2021. Employees are strongly encouraged to submit any requests for exemption on or before September 1, 2021 to receive a decision from the Department of Human Resources prior to the September 30, 2021 deadline.

Employees are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the second dose of a two-dose vaccine series, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine.

To comply with the policy by September 30<sup>th</sup>, your critical dates for vaccinations are:

- August 23<sup>rd</sup> – Latest date to get first dose of the Pfizer vaccine (requires 3 week interval between doses)
- September 16<sup>th</sup> – Latest date to get the one-dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine or final Moderna or Pfizer vaccine

**What happens if prior to starting or completing the vaccine regimen, I test positive for COVID-19 or find out that I have a medical condition that prevents me from being vaccinated?**

If you intend to vaccinate but are prevented from doing so by circumstances outside your control, you may be granted an exemption from the policy until such time as you have medical clearance to receive the vaccination. The required form and description of the documentation necessary to submit such an exemption is found on the [Human Resources COVID-19 webpage](#).

**If I submit an exemption request, have I complied with the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy?**

No. Employees must receive an approved exemption from the Department of Human Resources to comply with the policy. Employees must submit either a Medical Exemption Certification Form or Religious Exemption Request Form on or before September 1, 2021 to receive a decision from the Department of Human Resources prior to the September 30, 2021 deadline.

**What happens after I am approved for an exemption/accommodation?**

Immediately after an exemption/accommodation approval, the Department of Human Resources may begin the “interactive process” to determine a reasonable accommodation to the Policy.

**What does the “interactive process” for reasonable accommodations involve?**

The Department of Human Resources will partner with employees to discuss options that permit the employee to continue performing assigned responsibilities safely, effectively, and efficiently. In many cases, employees will report to their work space wearing a mask 100% of the time, practice social distancing, and be required to abide by other applicable safety protocols.

**What happens if my request for a medical exemption is denied?**

If a medical exemption request is denied, an employee may seek a review of the denial through the appeal process by completing the Appeal for Denial of Requested Exemption form located on the [Human Resources COVID-19 webpage](#). Appeals are reviewed by the Director of Human Resources, in consultation with the city’s panel physician, if necessary. If the employee does not seek an appeal, the employee will be required to disclose or decline to disclose their vaccination status, be fully vaccinated by September 30, 2021, or submit to weekly COVID-19 testing.

**If I fail to submit the required documentation, as outlined in the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy by the September 1, 2021 deadline, what will happen?**

Employees failing to submit any of the required documentation (fully vaccinated status, proof of 1st dose, declination of vaccine, declination of disclosure or request for exemption/accommodation) by September 1, 2021, may be placed on unpaid administrative leave and may be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with the city’s Standards of Conduct Policy.

Employees who submit their completed documents while on unpaid leave will require authorization from the Department of Human Resources prior to returning to work.

**May I use PML, PPL, or available Compensatory Time during my unpaid administrative leave?**

While on unpaid administrative leave, employees may request the use of accrued leave or available compensatory time in accordance with applicable city policies.

**What happens to my benefits during any period of unpaid administrative leave when I do not have accrued leave available for use?**

Employees are responsible for the employee’s share of the premiums of his/her enrolled insurance plans. Failure to pay the employee premiums while in a leave without pay status may result in Cancellation of Coverage.

**What does it mean to be “subject to weekly COVID-19 Testing”?**

Employees who decline the vaccine, decline disclosing their vaccination status or do not have an approved exemption/accommodation will be required to submit weekly COVID-19 test results (PCR or Rapid). **Home**

**COVID-19 test kit results will not be accepted.** Employees will be compensated for up to one hour of pay for time spent being vaccinated or time spent receiving weekly COVID-19 testing, when such testing or vaccination occurs during the employee's normal working hours. The city is currently working to identify testing/vaccination solutions, with the goals of ensuring that the cost associated with the COVID-19 vaccination or testing are covered at the city's expense. Additional information is forthcoming on available testing locations and how the city intends to manage the process of covering testing/vaccination expenses.

The first submission of COVID-19 test result is tentatively scheduled to be due by noon Friday, September 3, 2021. Employee COVID-19 test results must have been received from the testing facility within 5 calendar days of the weekly submission deadline.

**Will I be required to quarantine away from work while I wait for my weekly test results?**

Employees subject to weekly testing, and who **are not** experiencing symptoms, may return to work fully masked while awaiting test results. **If you are sick do not come to work.**

**What if I receive a positive COVID-19 test result after completing the weekly testing requirement?**

Employees who receive a positive test result will be required to complete a 10-day quarantine. The employee must also be fever (without the use of fever reducing medications) and symptom free for at least 24 hours prior to returning to work. Employees with a non-occupational COVID-19 exposure related absence will be advised to utilize accrued leave or leave without pay in accordance with city policy.

**Where can I go to get a COVID-19 Vaccination?**

There are several ways to locate vaccination providers near you:

- Visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find vaccination providers near you.
- Text your ZIP code to 438829 or call 1-800-232-0233 to find vaccine locations near you in the United States.
- Check your local pharmacy's website to see if vaccination appointments are available. Find out which pharmacies are participating in the [Federal Retail Pharmacy Program](#).
- Visit the [Virginia Department of Health](#) to locate vaccination sites in your area.

**If I lost my vaccination card or need proof of my vaccination status, what should I do?**

If you did not receive a COVID-19 vaccination card at your first appointment, contact the vaccination provider site where you received your first vaccine or visit the [Virginia Department of Health's Immunization Information System \(IIS\)](#) to search for your vaccination record and obtain an electronic copy. Vaccination providers are required to report COVID-19 vaccinations to their IIS and related systems.

If you enrolled in [v-safe](#) or [VaxText](#) after your first vaccine dose, you can access your vaccination information using those tools.

If you have made every effort to locate your vaccination information, but remain unable to locate the record or you still need a second shot, please locate a [vaccination provider](#) near you.

**May I schedule my vaccination appointments during work hours?**

Yes. Employees receiving a COVID-19 vaccination during the employee's normal working hours will be compensated for up to one hour of pay for time spent being vaccinated.

**If I experience discomfort after receiving the vaccine, may I use PML or PPL to cover my absence from work?**

If you suffer from any side effect that is similar to a COVID-19 symptom or do not feel well, you should stay home and either telework (if applicable) or request leave in accordance with applicable leave policies. If you are sick, STAY HOME.

**What if I was directly exposed to COVID-19 while at work or performing work related activities?**

Employees who may have experienced a work-related COVID-19 exposure should follow the Workers' Compensation COVID-19 Exposure Guidance found on the [Human Resources COVID-19 webpage](#).

**What if I am uncertain about receiving the COVID-19 vaccination?**

As with any health consideration, it can be helpful to discuss with a trusted advisor such as your doctor or other health professional. An additional resource is the [Employee Assistance Program](#), free to all City of Newport News employees. You may also visit, [CDC - "Getting Your Vaccine"](#).

**Who should I contact if I have questions about the policy?**

Employees may contact the Department of Human Resources COVID Care Team at [HRCOVID19@nnva.gov](mailto:HRCOVID19@nnva.gov).