



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) **COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy** **Addendum #1**

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.

If I plan to receive the vaccination in the future, what should I do between now and September 1st?

Employees who plan to receive at least one dose of a two-dose vaccine or who plan to receive a single-dose vaccine before September 1st should submit documentation of fully vaccinated status or proof of 1st dose by September 1, 2021.

Employees receiving their vaccination after September 1, 2021, should submit a Declination Form on or before our September 1, 2021 deadline. Once the employee becomes fully vaccinated, the employee should submit documentation of fully vaccinated status and Human Resources will withdraw the Declination Form.

What is the protocol for temporary workers and contractors?

The City of Newport News has elected to become a COVID Safe Employer. Temporary agencies are responsible for ensuring compliance with the city's policies and must develop their own internal procedures to administer these requirements. However, we encourage the temporary agency to maintain tracking documentation, should the city elect to audit their compliance. **Temporary associates should not attempt to upload documentation into the HR vaccination documents portal.** Any costs associated with testing or vaccinations would be covered by the temporary agency and not the city. A temporary associate's time away for testing is not billable to the City. The temporary associates may decide to personally cover that time or advise the temporary associate to go during non-working hours.

In regards to Contractors, it remains important to share with the contracting vendor that the City has elected to become a COVID Safe Employer and to provide the vendor with an overview of the city's guidance to employees. Prior to requiring the contractor's compliance with city policies, departments are encouraged to review the terms of their contract to determine if the contract references compliance with city policies. If compliance with city policies is not specifically addressed in the contact, a change order may be required to implement these protocols for contractors. Please seek the assistance of your Purchasing partner for further direction and guidance.

If I am fully vaccinated, can I take advantage of the weekly testing?

Per city policy, fully vaccinated employees are not required to submit to weekly COVID-19 testing. At this time, participation in any city-sponsored testing options will be limited to non-vaccinated employees, volunteers and interns. **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.**

Why are fully vaccinated employees exempt from weekly testing?

According to the CDC, screening allows early identification and isolation of persons who are asymptomatic, pre-symptomatic, or have only mild symptoms and who might be unknowingly transmitting virus. Screening helps to identify unknown cases so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission. The CDC indicates that [screening tests are recommended for unvaccinated people](#) to identify those who are asymptomatic and do not have known, suspected, or reported exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

According to the [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#), fully vaccinated people can refrain from routine screening testing, if feasible.

Will employees be required to get the booster shot to maintain “fully vaccinated status”?

To be in compliance with our COVID-19 Mandatory Reporting 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. 3rd doses of a COVID-19 vaccine is not a requirement under the city's current COVID-19 Mandatory Reporting Policy. *Keep in mind this is subject to change as 3rd shots and/or boosters become more readily available and the CDC updates its definition of “fully vaccinated”.

Will those who are required to wear a mask be identified on their employee badges or in some other way?

No. It is recommended and expected that each employee continue to take personal responsibility for protecting themselves, families and co-workers. Nothing contained in the city's policy precludes any employee from wearing a face covering; however, there are certain positions, circumstances, and job duties that require employees to wear face coverings and/or appropriate PPE.

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).***

If I am fully vaccinated, do I need to submit a form along with my card into the portal?

Employees who are fully vaccinated should submit their documentation of vaccination status into the HR Vaccine Documentation Portal on or before our September 1, 2021 deadline. No form is required if you are providing proof of vaccination status.

Will the city offer Emergency Sick Leave in the future for COVID related absences?

The city provided emergency paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) through midnight on June 30, 2021. Should the U.S. Department of Labor re-implement such requirements the city will provide further guidance to employees on any rights or responsibilities under the FFCRA.

At this time, employees with a non-occupational COVID-19 related absence will be advised to utilize accrued leave or leave without pay in accordance with city policy.

Will access to city buildings be limited to citizens and non-employees to help limit possible exposures?

Most city offices, facilities and buildings have re-opened to the public; however, citizens are encouraged to access city services online when possible. Employees are encouraged to wear masks 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 to encourage citizens, visitors and guests to "Mask Up".

If I am on PML or PPL for a week, am I still required to complete weekly testing?

Yes, and as a reminder, an employee's COVID-19 test results must have been received from the testing facility within 5 calendar days of the weekly submission deadline. Employees may not be permitted to resume work activities until the weekly testing results have been uploaded into the HR Vaccination Documentation Portal and verified. Failure to provide the weekly test results as outlined according to policy, may result in a violation of the city's Standards of Conduct Policy.

Does an approved Religious or Medical Exemption exempt me from weekly testing?

An approved Religious Exemption does not exempt the employee from the weekly testing requirement. Employees who submit a Medical Exemption Certification Form will not be exempt from the weekly testing unless medically certified by the employee's physician.

Can Human Resources provide supervisors with information regarding my vaccination status, exemption/accommodation or my decision to refrain from disclosing my vaccination status?

Yes. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued guidance permitting supervisors to request or receive confirmation regarding an employee's vaccination status. However, employees are advised not to provide any medical or genetic information as part of the proof. Supervisors will not maintain copies of any employee's vaccine or other medical documentation.

I am concerned with the commentary that I have heard from fellow employees regarding their opinions of fully vaccinated or unvaccinated employees, which may lead to the potential for indirect and direct retaliation, discrimination, and ostracism. How will Human Resources address this issues?

Per the city's Workplace Harassment Policy ([PAM 201](#)), all employees will deal with the public and with other employees with courtesy, respect, professionalism and tact. Although not all conduct will constitute unlawful harassment or discrimination, all forms of discrimination, harassment, improper or inappropriate behavior are prohibited by City policy, and the City will review the circumstances and will take appropriate disciplinary or other corrective action for illegal harassment, improper or inappropriate behavior as necessary. Managers at all levels

are responsible for monitoring employee behavior in the workplace and for taking prompt and appropriate action to identify and eliminate discriminatory, harassing, and inappropriate behavior before it rises to the level of a violation of federal law.

Any employee who feels that he or she has been a recipient of inappropriate or improper conduct, may discuss the matter with their supervisor or department director, as well as the supervisor or department director of the offending employee or the employee may report the situation directly to the Department of Human Resources.

No retaliation or adverse treatment may be taken against an employee as a result of an employee making a complaint, providing information, or participating in any investigation of a complaint

How should I track compliance to the policy for city unpaid interns or volunteers?

The following guidance should be followed for unpaid interns and volunteers:

- Departments will need to share the full COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccine Reporting Requirements Policy with any volunteers or unpaid interns within the department.
- Volunteers/Unpaid Interns **will be** 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. Volunteers should upload their documents to the [HR Secure Document Portal](#).
- Volunteers/Unpaid Interns who decline the vaccine or decline disclosure of vaccination status will be subject to the weekly testing requirement. More to come on testing resources.
- Volunteers/Unpaid Interns 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 using the [HR Secure Document portal](#). Volunteers/Unpaid Interns may request an exemption and seek workplace accommodations without fear of retaliation.
- The city expects all Volunteers/Unpaid Interns to be fully compliant with this policy by September 30, 2021.

If I am subject to weekly testing, where should I go for testing, and who will cover the cost?

The city is currently working to identify testing solutions, with the goal of ensuring that the cost associated with the COVID-19 testing is 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.

Will the city consider alternatives to the current vaccine choices should they become available?

The City will continue to follow guidance per CDC recommendations as our baseline for creating policies and procedures, while at the same time adhering to requirements and recommendations made at the state level. As more information is provided regarding alternative vaccine choices, City management will continue to provide employees with updates, to include alternative vaccine choices, as it strives to provide a safe work environment for its employees.