Vaccination Policy – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Approved by: City Manager
Approval date: September 7, 2021
Effective date: September 7, 2021
Compliance date: November 1, 2021

Policy statement

The City of Ottawa is committed to workplace safety and to protecting our employees, volunteers, contractors and our clients from the hazards of COVID-19. This policy is a temporary measure to reduce the risks of the hazards of COVID-19 and may be amended as new public health directives and/or provincial or federal government legislation, regulations and/or orders are formalized. Any such directives, legislation, regulations or orders shall take precedence until such time as this policy may be amended to conform to the new requirements.

The City of Ottawa requires all employees, volunteers, contractors and students completing placements to be fully vaccinated against the hazard of COVID-19 to support the health and safety of our workplaces and our community.

All City of Ottawa employees are required to be fully vaccinated with a Health Canada or World Health Organization recognized COVID-19 vaccine by November 1, 2021. Employees not yet fully vaccinated must receive one dose of COVID-19 vaccine by September 15, 2021 and the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine by October 15, 2021 to ensure compliance with this policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to mandate that all employees, volunteers, contractors and students completing placements must be fully vaccinated.

Application

This policy applies to all existing and future City employees, volunteers, contractors and students completing placements.

Employees in various City operations may have additional requirements under government directives, regulations, orders and/or legislation, based on their specific roles and responsibilities.

Providing proof of full vaccination against COVID-19, as per this policy, is a condition of employment with the City of Ottawa for all future hires.

Policy requirements

Vaccination is one of the critical protective measures against the hazard of COVID-19.

As part of the City's commitment to the continued development and implementation of workplace controls to reduce the hazards and mitigate the risks of COVID-19, all existing and future City employees, volunteers, contractors and students completing placements must provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19. Acceptable proof includes documentation verifying receipt of a vaccination series approved in Canada (i.e. Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD or Janssen/Johnson & Johnson), listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization or approved by Health Canada. The list of accepted vaccines may expand in the future.

Employees who are unable to be vaccinated must provide written proof of a medical reason from a physician or nurse practitioner that sets out the medical reason for not being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and the effective time-period for the medical exemption.

Employees without a medical exemption and not fully vaccinated against the hazard of COVID-19 will be provided with information and must complete a mandatory education course regarding COVID-19 vaccines to promote compliance with this policy.

Employees without an approved accommodation plan and not fully vaccinated against the hazard of COVID-19, in accordance with the implementation requirements of this policy, may elect to request vacation leave, time off in lieu of overtime (if available) or a leave of absence without pay.

Employee support

High vaccination rates against the hazards of COVID-19 are an effective measure to reducing the spread of COVID-19.

The City supports employees in becoming fully vaccinated against the hazard of COVID-19 by providing:

- Access to vaccination clinics through the deployment of mobile vaccination teams at geographically located worksites throughout the city

- Where operationally feasible, reasonable arrangements can be made to allow for staff to attend COVID-19 vaccination clinics during work time, using existing applicable leave entitlements
- Paid sick leave in accordance with their respective collective agreements, terms and conditions of employment or legislated leave if the employee experiences side effects to the vaccine
- Educational sessions during their work hours on how the COVID-19 vaccines work and their benefits, vaccine safety, the risks of not being vaccinated and the possible side effects of the vaccine

Continued compliance with health and safety control

All employees must continue to follow health and safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including but not limited to completing workplace self-screening, using and maintaining personal protective equipment, wearing appropriate masks and maintaining physical distancing as required. Refer to the COVID-19 Health & Safety Controls Policy on the City COVID-19 Employee Information SharePoint site Safety page site.

Implementation requirements

Employees must disclose their vaccination status to the City in accordance with the established processes and timelines determined by the employer.

Employees without a medical exemption and not fully vaccinated against the hazard of COVID-19 must attend a mandatory education course on how the COVID-19 vaccines work and their benefits, vaccine safety the risks of not being vaccinated and the possible side effects of the vaccine in addition to complying with the requirements set out in this policy.

Employees must update their vaccination status as they receive each dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by the dates set out in this policy.

Information and reporting

Vaccination status information will only be used and disclosed for the purpose of implementing reasonable controls to ensure the health and safety of all individuals in the workplace through appropriate health and safety planning.

Depersonalized aggregate data will be disclosed to the Province of Ontario in accordance with reporting requirements and may also be disclosed to City of Ottawa Council or in response to media requests for statistical information regarding the City’s vaccination rates.

City departments with specific ministry or federal government reporting requirements are responsible to ensure reporting requirements for their operations are met.

All personal information, including personal health information, will be collected, used, disclosed, retained and safeguarded in accordance with applicable City policies and privacy legislation.

Responsibilities

City Manager, General Managers and Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring proper application of this policy
- Ensuring service specific processes comply with corporate standards and government regulations, orders and directives
- Ensuring information and resources promoting the importance of being vaccinated and following current health and safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are provided to employees
- Ensuring employee vaccination status information is collected, maintained and disclosed in accordance with this policy and privacy legislation

Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- Providing employees, volunteers, contractors and students with access to information about COVID-19 health and safety protocols and COVID-19 vaccines
- Ensuring employees are following health and safety protocols including being vaccinated against COVID-19
- Ensuring employee vaccination status information is collected, maintained and disclosed in accordance with this policy and privacy legislation
- Collecting and maintaining vaccination information for contractors entering City workplaces as part of their contract administration duties
- Ensuring employees who are not fully vaccinated have provided required medical proof of exemption or have completed the mandatory COVID-19 educational course
- Reviewing and managing accommodation requests in consultation with Human Resources and in accordance with the City’s Accommodation Policy

Employees are responsible for:

- Providing proof of being vaccinated against COVID-19
- Providing proof of medical exemption if they are not fully vaccinated

- Completing the mandatory COVID-19 educational course if proof of vaccination was not provided
- Advising their manager or supervisor of the need for accommodation in accordance with the City's Accommodation Policy
- Educating themselves about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccinations
- Continuing to follow health and safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 before and after vaccination
- Maintaining their vaccination status including obtaining boosters as they are required and providing proof of full vaccination in accordance with this policy

Human Resources is responsible for:

- Collecting and maintaining vaccination status information in accordance with privacy legislation
- Preparing vaccination status reports
- Developing required processes and protocols to implement this policy
- Ensuring a COVID-19 education course is available to employees and tracking completion rates
- Providing guidance and support to managers and supervisors to assist with developing and managing employee accommodation plans
- Ensuring all future hires are aware of and meet the requirements of this policy

Monitoring/Contraventions

City leaders will continue to monitor public health and government directives to ensure our COVID-19 controls continue to effectively protect the health and safety of our employees, volunteers, contractors and students completing placements. In partnership with Ottawa Public Health, City leaders will continue to review and assess health and safety protocols to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in our workplaces and our community. Any changes to safety measure will be communicated to employees and the appropriate policies will be updated accordingly.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy.

Employees who do not comply with this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

References

COVID-19 Health and Safety Controls Policy
Leave of Absence Policy
Leave Guidelines and Return to Work Criteria
Workplace Accommodation Policy

Legislative and administrative authorities

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005(link is external)
Canadian Human Rights Act(link is external)
Canada Labour Code Part II -Occupational Health and Safety, 2019(link is external)
Occupational Health and Safety Act(link is external)
Ontario Human Rights Code(link is external)
Ontario Ministry of Health and Ontario Ministry of Long-Term Care Directive #6(link is external)PDF opens in a new tab or window

Definitions

Fully vaccinated means that it has been at least 14 days since receiving:

- A second dose of an accepted two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or a combination of accepted vaccines (Moderna, Pfizer BioNTech or AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD)
- The only dose of the single dose COVID-19 vaccine of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson)
- A complete COVID-19 vaccine series that is listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization

Proof of vaccination – Documentation verifying receipt of a vaccination series approved by Health Canada or the World Health Organization including Ontario Ministry of Health, other province or territory or international equivalent indicating individual immunization status against the COVID-19 virus.

Enquiries

For more information on this policy, contact: E-mail the HR Service Centre at HRServiceCentre@Ottawa.ca(link sends e-mail) or call 613-580-2424, ext. 47411.