



# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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CHIEF OF STAFF

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**TO:** A-Team; All Employees  
**FROM:** James R. Engler  
**DATE:** November 19, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for City Employees

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## Overview

Philadelphia has worked hard to turn back COVID-19, and we have had success in doing so through our shared commitment to safety protocols, including vaccinations. However, that fight is not over, and the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines remain our best weapon in this ongoing struggle. The COVID-19 vaccines have been the subject of significant public discourse since their creation, and the City realizes that some of its employees remain uncomfortable with vaccinations. However, evidence has demonstrated that all three currently-approved<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective at preventing serious illness<sup>2</sup>. As public servants, we bear a responsibility to mitigate the harm that would result from inadvertent transmission of COVID-19 to our colleagues and the public and set an example for other organizations and companies. We owe it to them—and to ourselves—to do all we can to keep us all safe.

Based on the continued impact of the pandemic and acknowledging that vaccinations are the primary tool to reduce spread, on August 11, 2021, [the City announced](#) that all new employees starting on or after September 1, 2021 must be vaccinated as a condition of their employment and established additional masking requirements for current employees who remain unvaccinated after this date. Additionally, on August 16, 2021, the Board of Health for the City of Philadelphia issued an [Emergency Regulation Governing the Control and Prevention of COVID-19 Mandating Vaccines for Healthcare Workers and In Higher Education, Healthcare, and Related Settings](#). And, most recently, the City announced that all exempt and non-represented civil service City employees must be fully vaccinated or have been granted an exemption from the vaccination requirement by December 1, 2021.

**To further protect our workforce and the public we serve, we are extending the vaccination requirements detailed in this memo to cover all City employees and certain City contractors effective January 14, 2022. This includes employees represented by a union.**

## Covered Individuals

- All City employees, regardless of location of work. This includes part-time, seasonal and temporary City employees.

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<sup>1</sup> Food and Drug Administration. (2021, October 15). *COVID-19 Vaccines*. Retrieved from Food and Drug Administration Website: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control. (2021, October 12). *Safety of Covid-19 Vaccines*. Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html>

- Any City contractor functioning as an Embedded Contractor regardless of their location of work.
  - For the purposes of this policy, Embedded Contractors are individuals who are not City employees, and either (1) fulfill a City staffing need by regularly spending more than one third of their work week providing services to the City pursuant to a City contract in such a time, manner, or place that members of the public or City employees could reasonably believe that they are City employees; or (2) utilize a City email address or wear a City uniform pursuant to a City contract.

### **Policy**

- In order to continue working in their current position, all individuals covered by this policy are required to complete a full schedule of COVID-19 vaccination(s) and provide proof of their vaccination status; or, be granted an exemption to the vaccination requirements, by January 14, 2022.
- City employees who fail to comply with this mandate will be considered unable to perform their duties, will be informed they may no longer report for work, and will be carried on unpaid status for no longer than 15 working days. At the end of that period, if they have not started their schedule of vaccination, they will be separated from employment. Employees who begin their schedule during this period will be given an appropriate length of time to complete that schedule as determined by the type of vaccine and will be required to double mask or wear an appropriate N95 or equivalent as well as participate in the testing requirements detailed in this policy until the vaccination schedule is complete. Should the employee fail to complete the schedule and provide proof that they've completed their schedule of vaccination in the time frame provided, they will be separated from employment.

### **Exemptions**

- An individual may not simply opt-out of vaccination. However, this policy does provide for religious or medical exemptions. The requirements of the exemption requests are provided below.
- City employees wishing to request such an exemption may request the appropriate exemption forms from their departmental human resources professional. The exemption request must be submitted to the Employee Relations Unit within the City's Department of Labor by December 20, 2021 to ensure sufficient time for the exemption request to be reviewed and approved by January 14, 2022. The Employee Relations Unit will determine if an exemption applies, and when circumstances necessitate, consult with the appointing authority on such determination. An employee granted an exemption must strictly follow the applicable accommodations.

#### *Medical*

- A Covered Individual may request an exemption by submitting a certification from a licensed healthcare provider to their HR professional. In the case of a City employee, these requests may be submitted to the Employee Relations Unit directly utilizing the appropriate exemption form. Medical exemptions must include documentation from a licensed healthcare provider that demonstrates the exemption applies to the specific individual submitting the certification because the COVID-19 vaccine is medically contraindicated for

the individual. The request must also be signed by the employee. For the purposes of this mandate, a licensed healthcare provider means a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant licensed by an authorized Pennsylvania licensing board.

### *Religious*

- A Covered Individual may request an exemption by submitting a signed statement to their HR professional that the individual has a sincerely held religious belief that prevents them from receiving the COVID-19 vaccination. In the case of a City employee, these requests may be submitted to the Employee Relations Unit directly using the appropriate exemption form. The request must include a certification as to why the worker's religious belief prevents them receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and must be signed by the employee. Philosophical or moral exemptions are not permitted.

### **Accommodations for Exemptions**

- Employees granted exemptions must strictly follow all safety protocols in place for unvaccinated individuals, which will include double-masking or wearing an appropriate N95 or equivalent and submitting to routine testing at a frequency and manner to be determined by the City of Philadelphia in consultation with an employee's Appointing Authority.
- Testing protocols will be developed by the City of Philadelphia in consultation with the Appointing Authority and may vary based upon the nature, frequency, and location of an employee's work.
- Costs of any testing for City employees shall be covered by the City of Philadelphia.

### **Vaccination Bonus**

- Any permanent City employees who have completed their full schedule of COVID-19 vaccination and provided proof of their vaccination status by December 24, 2021, will receive a cash bonus up to \$300.
- The cash bonus will be distributed and apportioned in accordance with current City procedure regarding cash bonuses.
- These bonuses do not extend to the following individuals:
  - any employee receiving an exemption to the vaccination requirements;
  - any employee working less than 20 hours per week; and,
  - City contractors covered by this policy.

### **Department Responsibility**

City departments and agencies must:

- Identify and notify employees covered by the mandate;
- Inform employees of the policy and their responsibilities under the policy;
- Receive, track and document the employee's vaccination status;
- Take appropriate next steps with employees who fail to conform to the policy; and,
- Enforce policy requirements including testing, masking, and exemption documentation as appropriate.

## **Employee Responsibility**

City employees must:

- Be vaccinated according to an approved schedule;
- Provide proof in the form of an official vaccination card or other appropriate medical documentation which demonstrates that the employee has completed their schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations. A copy of an employee's medical documentation of their vaccination status shall be uploaded in OnePhilly through Employee Self-Service or presented to the employee's HR manager, who will enter the vaccine manufacturer and the dates administered in OnePhilly;
- Provide accurate information on their vaccination status; and,
- Comply with policy requirements including testing, masking, and exemption documentation as appropriate.

## **City Contractor Responsibility**

City contractors who have employees covered by this policy must:

- Identify and notify employees covered by the mandate;
- Inform employees of the policy and their responsibilities under the policy;
- Establish internal systems to receive, track and document the employee's vaccination status or any exemption requests made by their covered employees;
- Report to the City the vaccination status of their covered employees;
- Take appropriate next steps with employees who fail to conform to the policy; and,
- Enforce policy requirements including testing, masking, and exemption documentation as appropriate.

Any questions on this policy should be directed to your departmental human resources or safety professional.