

Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy

The following information is meant to address questions leaders may get from employees about Alberta Health Services (AHS) Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy. This document will be updated as additional information is available. We encourage you to check back frequently for updates.

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Policy

1. How and when will managers be made aware of which of their employees are non-compliant with the policy?

- There are two ways in which a manager may be informed of non-compliance:
 - A manager may be advised by an employee of their intention to be fully vaccinated, or has information to suggest that the employee does not intend to comply with the policy. Where this occurs the manager should attempt to meet with the employee as soon as reasonably

possible to discuss their concerns with vaccination against COVID-19 and provide educational materials on the COVID-19 vaccines. Please keep a written record to document when you met with an employee to discuss their concerns and the resources provided. Please refer to the [Conversation Starters for Leaders](#) to assist you in having these conversations.

- Given employees have until Oct. 16, 2021 to comply, on or about Oct. 17, 2021, managers will be made aware of which employees have not submitted their vaccination disclosure (Got My COVID-19 Immunization form) and will be considered to be non-compliant. Workplace Health and Safety is currently developing a process for managers to receive these reports directly, as well as determining frequency of updates.

2. **When will managers be notified which employees will be on unpaid Leave of Absence (LOA) so they can prepare for management of staffing requirements?**

- As soon as it's determined which employees have not submitted their vaccination form, managers will be notified that these employees will be placed on LOA effective Nov. 1, 2021. If managers are aware in advance of Oct. 17, 2021 of the intent of staff to not be fully vaccinated/not comply with policy, they may choose to initiate appropriate plans to staff for up to six months from Nov. 1, 2021.
- Managers are encouraged to highlight early, where they are anticipating staffing issues with their Leader and HRBP Advisor. Where possible, advanced planning to address staffing needs will occur at the zone/department level.

3. **When will managers be provided an update of what the rate of compliance is for their team?**

- We are currently working on a tableau report that will display policy compliance rates down to the unit level by the end of September. By early October a tool for managers to look up which employees are compliant or non-compliant we will be provided to all leaders.

4. **Will employees who are able to or currently work from home still be required to comply with the policy of being fully immunized?**

- Yes. Regardless of the employee's work location, all employees are required to comply with the policy.

5. **Some employees have been emailing their manager with information that they are fully immunized. Should the manager be forwarding this somewhere for tracking?**

- Employees should not be providing this information to their manager and managers should not accept or collect this information. Employees should be advised to complete the online immunization form found on Insite [COVID-19 Got My COVID-19 Immunization Form](#) no later than Oct. 16, 2021. See [staff FAQ](#) for more details.

6. **Should managers start asking their staff if they are immunized or not? If so, what kind of communication should managers be sending and discussing with their staff?**

- Managers should not be asking employees if they are immunized or whether they intend to comply with the policy. Managers can refer to the [Leader Talking Points](#) and [staff FAQs](#) and direct employees to available online resources to assist with questions. Please refer to the [Conversation Starters for Leaders](#) to assist you in having these conversations.

7. **Are managers required to socialize the Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 policy?**
 - It is important that managers are familiar with the policy and resources including staff [FAQ](#) with their teams. Managers can refer to the [Leader Talking Points](#) and direct employees to other available online resources to assist with questions found on [Insite](#). Please refer to the [Conversation Starters for Leaders](#) to assist you in having these conversations.
8. **What is the process and timeline for employees to submit their proof of immunization in order to comply with the policy?**
 - Employees are to submit their [COVID-19 Got My COVID- 19 Immunization Form](#) by Oct. 16, 2021, to show that they are fully immunized. See [staff FAQ](#) for more details.
9. **What do leaders do with communications/documentation that is sent to them by employees stating that they will not comply with the policy? Is there a central intake for these documents to be sent? Who will be responding to these employees?**
 - We are aware that some employees are sending various correspondence and documentation disputing vaccines as a rationale to why they will not be complying with the policy. We are determining a process and a central intake to receive this information and will provide further updates as details are confirmed. However, regardless of any documentation of this nature submitted by employees, all employees must submit their proof of immunization form to [COVID-19 Got My COVID- 19 Immunization Form](#) by Oct. 16, 2021. Employees that are not compliant with the policy on Oct. 31, 2021 will be placed on an unpaid LOA effective Nov. 1, 2021.
10. **What do we do with the employees who already have said they are not going to comply with the policy?**
 - We are aware that some employees are sending various correspondence in advance that they will not comply with the policy. Where this occurs the manager should attempt to meet with the employee as soon as reasonably possible to discuss their concerns with vaccination against COVID-19 and provide educational materials on the COVID-19 vaccines. Please keep a written record to document when you met with an employee to discuss their concerns and the resources provided. See the [Conversation Starters for Leaders](#) to assist you in having these conversations.
11. **What do we do if the employee wants to go on an LOA now rather than wait until Oct, 31, 2021 as they already advised that they do not intend to comply with the policy?**
 - We do not recommend approving requests for an LOA for an employee in advance if they do not intend to comply with the policy. Employees that are not compliant with the policy on Oct. 31, 2021 will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence.
12. **When and how will employees be notified that they are being placed on Unpaid LOA?**
 - An employees who is non-compliant with the policy as of Oct. 17, 2021 will receive a letter notifying them that they will be placed on an unpaid LOA after Oct. 31, 2021. Details of the letter and notification process will be shared as soon as the process is finalized. Employees that have not submitted their vaccination immunization record by early October will receive an email reminder this is outstanding.

13. How will employees be placed on unpaid leave? Is it a bulk process through Human Resources Shared Services (HRSS) or will individual managers have to go into e-People and place on unpaid LOA?

- Non-compliant employees will be placed on an unpaid LOA on Nov. 1, 2021. HR Shared Services will complete this process for the manager. The manager will not have to take action to place the employee on leave in e-People. An internal process is being developed and further details will be shared as soon as the process is finalized.

14. How long will employees continue to be on unpaid leave? Is this reviewed at a certain point?

- Once an employee is placed on an unpaid LOA for non-compliance with the policy, they will remain on an unpaid LOA until they become fully immunized in accordance with the definition of the policy and provide proof of the same. At this time, we expect that any period of unpaid leave will be reviewed after 6 months to correspond with when the policy is set to be reviewed.

15. How will managers know if an employee who is on unpaid LOA becomes fully immunized? How are the employee lists updated with this information?

- Prior to return to work, employees placed on unpaid LOA will have to provide proof that they are fully immunized in accordance with the policy. Employees are to submit their form once fully immunized using [COVID-19 Got My COVID-19 Immunization Form](#). We are determining the process how reports will be updated as employees submit their immunization forms after Oct. 16, 2021, in order to return from the unpaid LOA. Further details on this process will be communicated when confirmed.

16. Once employees are placed on a leave how will this impact their benefits?

- If the employee is placed on an unpaid LOA, the general terms for an unpaid LOA in the applicable collective agreement or other terms and conditions would apply:
 - Employees may, subject to the insurer's requirements, make prior arrangements for the prepayment of full premiums (both employee and employer portion) for the applicable benefit plans.
 - There will be no accrual of vacation and sick time after 30 days of leave.
 - As per the LAPP Standards, contributions are not required during this unpaid LOA. Eligible employees will have the opportunity to buy back their service through the annual pension buy-back campaign or through the prior service process.

17. How will being placed on unpaid LOA impact an employee's ability to complete their yearly benefits enrollment?

- Employees will continue to be responsible for making their flex benefit allocations during the annual open enrollment period. Employees will also continue to be eligible for their flex spending accounts during the period of unpaid LOA regardless if they keep their medical/dental coverage. Further information on the open enrollment period will be forthcoming.

18. Can employees commence pension benefits while on an unpaid LOA?

- No. Employees who are on a leave from their current position are unable to commence their pension. Please refer to the [LAPP Standard FAQ](#) for further information. Employees may also choose to terminate their employment voluntarily if they wish to commence receiving pension.

19. If an employee would like to inquire about retiring rather than being placed on an unpaid LOA for non-compliance with the policy, whom should they speak to?

- Please refer to the pension plan information on Insite or contact the HR Contact Centre at 1-877-511-4455 for further assistance.

20. How will employees currently on LOA for unrelated reasons (e.g., Maternity LOA, WCB, Disability leave) be advised of the policy and requirement to be fully immunized upon their return?

- Employees currently receiving STD/LTD benefits from Canada Life will be notified by Canada Life of the policy and requirement to be fully immunized prior to their return to work.
- Employees on other leave of absences (i.e., sick leave, maternity leave, etc.) will be provided targeted communication by AHS.

21. Is the employee's position held for them once they are placed on an unpaid LOA or can managers backfill permanently, and a suitable position remains for the employee if or when they are able to return?

- Please consult with your HRBP Advisor for further assistance and options that may be available to you. Given varying circumstances involving the employee being placed on an unpaid LOA as well as operational requirements, managers may exercise discretion with respect to how to backfill the resulting vacancy, unless otherwise specifically provided in an applicable collective agreement.
- Please keep in mind that when employees return from leave, AHS will generally need to provide them with a comparable position to what they had before going on leave. With this in mind, in most cases, it will be appropriate to fill shifts on a casual basis or posting the position on a temporary basis.

22. Will employees who are placed on an unpaid LOA receive a Record of Employment?

- Yes. Employees will receive a Record of Employment once placed on an unpaid leave of absence that will extend greater than 30 days. ROE's will be made available after Nov. 15, 2021 and will be filed with Service Canada by HR Shared Services.

23. Will employees be able to apply for EI benefits if they are placed on an unpaid LOA?

- As eligibility for employment insurance benefits is determined by Service Canada, we are unable to provide any information in this regard to employees at this time. Employees can contact Service Canada for additional details and eligibility criteria.

24. How are new hires being advised of the policy requirement to be fully immunized? For current recruitment that is underway, what do managers need to advise potential candidates of before offering a position?

- Job posting language has been amended to include messaging about the policy and the requirement for new hires to be compliant with the policy prior to commencing work. Template offer letters are currently in the process of being updated to include messaging regarding being fully immunized as a condition of employment. Additional messaging and hiring tools (i.e., hiring checklist(s), interview template(s), etc.) will also be updated to assist when interviewing candidates. Communication is being drafted to be sent to new hires informing them of the policy and this new requirement.
- Before new hires can be on-boarded, they will need to provide proof of being fully immunized. This process will be similar to employees needing to upload valid Criminal Record Checks in the

Recruitment Management System (RMS) prior to commencing work. During the interview process, the Manager is encouraged to discuss that the requirement to provide proof of full immunization as a condition of employment. This will also be reinforced in the offer letter once they are updated.

25. Will there be new time codes for employees who are placed on an unpaid leave?

- Yes. New time codes and time coding information is being developed and will be shared with managers and timekeepers/schedulers once made available.

26. If employees are working a night shift on Oct. 31, 2021 (7pm – 7am Nov 1) and they are not vaccinated, are they able to work the full shift?

- If the majority of hours fall between midnight and 0700 hours, the employee cannot work the shift.

27. How would staff be accommodated if they can't be immunized for medical or other protected ground?

- Any AHS employee who is unable to be immunized due to a medical reason, or for another protected ground under the Alberta Human Rights Act, will be reasonably accommodated, up to the point of undue hardship, in accordance with the AHS Workplace Accommodation Policy.
- AHS has established an accommodation adjudication panel to ensure that all accommodation requests are reviewed consistently.

28. How will managers be made aware that an employee has applied for an accommodation? How do managers know an employee's accommodation request has been accepted or denied?

- Once the employee has submitted a request to the accommodations inbox, the central intake team will respond with the appropriate script and form(s). They will notify the manager by email that the employee has submitted a request, however, no other information will be shared. The manager will be contacted again immediately following a decision by the panel regarding the outcome.

29. For employees who are in a multiple employer situation and are requesting an accommodation, do they have to apply for an accommodation under each organization?

- Yes. Employees who work for multiple employers including AHS, APL, Carewest, CapitalCare and Covenant Health and want to apply for an accommodation must do so with each applicable employer. Please see the staff [FAQ](#) for further information regarding accommodations.

30. Do employees need to complete and submit the "Got my COVID-19 Immunization Form" for each organization if they work for multiple employers?

- Yes. Employees who work for multiple employers, including AHS, APL, Carewest, CapitalCare and Covenant Health, must submit their COVID-19 Immunization Form with each applicable employer in order to be properly reviewed as per each organization's processes. Carewest and Capital Care employees will have their own method of collecting immunization records.

31. Can employees who are placed on an unpaid leave after Nov. 1, 2021 for non-compliance with the policy request a payout of any unused banked time (i.e. vacation, stat, overtime)?

- Yes. Employees who are placed on an unpaid LOA will be able to [request a bank payout](#) in accordance with applicable collective agreement provisions, NUJEE Terms and Conditions of Employment, and AHS policy.

32. If an employee calls in sick between now and Oct. 31, 2021, do we ask for additional information from the employee to substantiate their sick leave?

- We will treat all sick time as per our normal processes including asking for additional medical information to support a claim for any absence greater than 7 days.

33. I have more questions. Who can I contact?

- You can email questions to AHSVaccineTaskForce@ahs.ca. You may also contact your HRBP Advisor.