



COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Approved By: Chief Administrative Officer

Approved On: September 20, 2021

Policy Statement

York Region is committed to taking every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of staff from the COVID-19 hazard. Requiring mandatory vaccination verification for all workers will help maximize COVID-19 vaccination rates among employees and is one of the critical control measures for the hazards of COVID-19.

Application

This policy applies to all Regional employees, volunteers and students.

Purpose

The purpose of the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy is:

- To meet York Region's obligations under provincial legislation to take all necessary and reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of its workforce and to protect the broader communities within York Region
- To follow Public Health guidance and direction that vaccines provide a high level of protection against COVID-19 and related variants
- To ensure employees have access to information required to make informed decisions about COVID-19 vaccination

Definitions

Fully vaccinated: Employees are considered fully vaccinated after receiving the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine or combination of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the World Health Organization or Health Canada (e.g., two doses of a two-dose vaccine series, or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series)

Partially vaccinated: The employee has received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine approved by the World Health Organization or Health Canada

Unvaccinated: The employee has not received any COVID-19 vaccine approved by the World Health Organization or Health Canada, or is not willing to share their COVID-19 vaccination status with York Region

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination: The physical or electronic receipt provided by the Ministry of Health. Copies can be obtained by logging into the provincial vaccine portal.

For those vaccinated outside of Canada or Ontario: proof of immunization (e.g. an immunization record, proof of vaccination certificate (PVC)) or confirmation by local public health is required to verify the COVID-19 vaccine product received outside of Canada or Ontario.

Description

Requirements for all employees, students and volunteers

All employees, students and volunteers are required to provide proof of at least a first COVID-19 vaccination dose no later than October 1, 2021. Confirmation of full series of vaccination doses received is required to be submitted to the Region no later than November 1, 2021.

New employees, students and volunteers are required to provide proof of vaccination in compliance with this policy prior to commencing employment at the Region.

Declaration and submission requirements are outlined in the [COVID-19 Vaccination Guideline](#).

Employees, students and volunteers in certain positions and/or divisions may have obligations in addition to this policy under division-specific policies regarding COVID-19 vaccination or under provincial regulations, legislation or directives applicable to them.

Approved exemptions

There are very limited circumstances under which an individual cannot receive a vaccine. Applications for exemptions under the Ontario Human Rights Code (“Human Rights exemptions”) will be reviewed on a case by case basis and must meet the criteria identified on the Exemption Request form.

Where required, Human Resources will develop a reasonable and appropriate accommodation plan that will put in place appropriate alternative health and safety measures for approved exemptions.

Additional conditions for employees with approved exemptions may be imposed for health and safety purposes, which may include regular COVID-19 testing.

New and returning employees

New hires and employees returning from leave must provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or have an approved Human Rights exemption prior to their start date or return from leave of absence.

Collection of vaccinations disclosure information

The Region will maintain vaccination disclosure information, including documentation verifying receipt of a vaccination series approved by Health Canada or the World Health Organization, in accordance with privacy legislation. This information will be used to the extent necessary for implementation of this policy, for administering health and safety protocols, and infection and prevention control measures in the workplace.

Employees may also be required to disclose their vaccination status by law or to otherwise give effect to this policy, including, but not limited to:

- Situations where employees are required to enter premises governed by provincial legislation requiring vaccination
- Where directed to stay home as a result of the daily screening tool in order to comply with the clearance criteria to return to work (e.g. after experiencing symptoms, a COVID-19 exposure, or a travel quarantine exemption)

Responsibilities

Employees

- Comply with the terms of this policy and its guidelines
- Adhere to Health and Safety and Public Health requirements in the course of their work
- Employees in certain positions and/or divisions may have obligations in addition to this policy under division-specific policies regarding COVID-19 vaccination or under provincial regulations, legislation or directives applicable to them

Management

- Communicate with employees the importance of compliance with Health and Safety and Public Health requirements
- Review compliance data and address issues of noncompliance
- Encourage employees to get vaccinated and, if required, to take the COVID-19 self-directed education program
- Advise employees on leave of the requirement to comply with the policy prior to their return to the workplace

- Be familiar with the resources related to this policy, including the FAQs, exemption request forms and timelines for compliance

Human Resources

- Understand and ensure the policy is administered in accordance with applicable legislation, such as the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56
- Understand the relevant provisions of applicable collective agreements and/or policies and procedures
- Develop the COVID-19 policy, guidelines and education program including procedures for maintaining vaccination disclosure information, including documentation verifying receipt of a vaccination series, in accordance with privacy legislation.
- Assist employees with meeting their responsibilities under the policy
- Provide training, guidance and support to management on the application of this policy
- Facilitate the process for non-medical Human Rights exemption requests under the policy
- Provide support to management on managing approved Human Rights exemptions, employee accommodations and return to work matters related to this policy
- Ensure employees with an approved Human Rights exemption are accommodated in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, applicable collective agreements and/or policies and procedures
- Ensure all Talent Acquisition processes align with this policy and that new hires comply with this policy prior to their first day of work
- Develop and maintain an education course available to Regional employees that is consistent with Provincial recommendations about COVID-19 vaccinations and facilitate reporting on course completion by staff to management
- Ensure the policy is administered in a fair and consistent manner across the organization
- Use the vaccination disclosure information to the extent necessary for implementation of this policy, for administering health and safety protocols, and infection and prevention control measures in the workplace

Employee Health & Safety

- Facilitate the medical exemption request process including the collection and verification of required information and communicating the request outcome (approved, denied) to the requestor and their manager
- Facilitate and provide recommendations necessary to determine if assistance can be offered to reasonably accommodate the employee in a safe and responsible manner for those with approved medical exemptions
- Collect and maintain employee vaccination disclosure information (proof of vaccination) on behalf of the organization and maintain confidentiality as per the Confidentiality of Employee Health Files Policy
- Support statistical reporting, as required, by the Region and/or in accordance with provincial reporting requirements

Compliance

Employees, volunteers and students who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment or cancellation of volunteer placement.

Reference

Legislative and other authorities

- [Section 25\(2\)\(h\) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Confidentiality of Employee Health Files Policy](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety – Duties and Responsibilities Policy](#)

Appendices

- [Appendix A: COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Guideline](#)
- [Appendix B: COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Form](#)
- [Appendix C: Creed/Religious Beliefs Exemption Form](#)

Contact

HR Support Centre at HRSupportCentre@york.ca or 1-877-464-9675, ext. 73790

Approval

CAO Signature: ORIGINAL APPROVED BY B. MACGREGOR

Date Approved: SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

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COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

This document explains the COVID-19 vaccination requirements for employees, volunteers and students for the organization and accompanies the [COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#). Refer to the [COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) for details.

This document contains the following sections:

- Submission of required documentation
- Unvaccinated staff
- Human Rights exemptions requests
- Collecting and reporting

SUBMISSION OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Employees are required to provide proof of full vaccination by **November 1, 2021**. A staggered approach has been taken to provide all employees with as much opportunity to receive a full series of an approved COVID-19 vaccine and provide evidence of such, prior to November 1, 2021.

Submission of an employee's declaration and proof of vaccination (first dose, second dose, as applicable) will be completed via a form that will be accessed by a link that will be provided to employees.

By Friday, October 1, 2021, all current employees are required to complete their Declaration of COVID-19 Vaccination Status and submit proof of at least first dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.

Fully vaccinated employees are encouraged to submit proof that they have received the full series* of an approved vaccine as soon as possible.

*full series means two complete doses of a two-dose vaccine, or one dose of a one-dose vaccine



By Monday, November 1, 2021, all current employees are required to have submitted proof of their second dose of an approved vaccine, or proof that they have received the full series of an approved vaccine.

Effective the date the policy comes into effect, new employees, students and volunteers are required to comply with the policy prior to commencing employment and beginning work. Failure to comply with this condition of employment will result in an offer of employment being rescinded, or work or volunteer placement being cancelled.

UNVACCINATED STAFF

An employee who does not disclose their vaccination status to the employer will be treated as unvaccinated.

If by October 1, 2021 an employee declares that they have not yet been vaccinated or does not disclose their vaccination status to the Region, they will be required to:

1. Complete and attest to completing the COVID-19 education program, **COVID-19 Vaccination: Making an Informed Decision**, available on [ROSIE](#) (course code HS0283) by **October 8, 2021**. This education program can be completed on work time.

The education program includes information on:

- How COVID-19 vaccines work
 - Vaccine safety related to the development of the COVID-19 vaccines
 - The benefits of vaccination against COVID-19
 - Risks of not being vaccinated against COVID-19
 - Possible side effects of COVID-19 vaccination; **AND**,
2. Make arrangements to receive a full series of a World Health Organization or Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine. Receipts showing dose administration to the employee must be provided to the Region by **November 1, 2021**.

HUMAN RIGHTS EXEMPTION REQUESTS

Current employees

There are very limited circumstances under which an individual cannot receive a vaccine.



Current employees may submit a request for exemption based on grounds protected under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (medical or religious) to the Human Resources Support Centre by email at HRSupportCentre@york.ca. Those who have an approved exemption may consult with Human Resources for the development of an accommodation plan, if applicable.

Employees who seek a Human Rights exemption will be required to submit the following documentation as applicable:

Medical exemption: The Vaccine Medical Exemption Form (Appendix A) must be completed by a physician or nurse practitioner, indicating the effective time period for the medical reason. Additional documentation may be required.

Religious exemption: The Creed/Religious Beliefs Exemption Form (Appendix B) and any supporting documentation for the request.

The information will be considered and additional information may be required before a decision can be made.

New employees, students or volunteers

New employees, students or volunteers who seek a Human Rights exemption for the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy during the recruitment process will be required to submit the above documentation prior to beginning work at the Region. The employee, student or volunteer cannot begin work until their exemption request has been considered and decided.

Approved Exemption Request

Unvaccinated employees who have an approved exemption may be required to submit to regular testing for COVID-19 and demonstrate a negative result, at intervals to be determined by the employer, and/or as required by Provincial direction. This testing may take place during paid work hours.

Denied Exemption Request

If a Human Rights exemption request is denied, the employee will be required to comply with the vaccination requirements of the [COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#).

COLLECTING TRACKING AND REPORTING

York Region will:

1. Maintain and update employee vaccination status as appropriate and collect and maintain documentation that includes:
 - The number who have provided proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19
 - The number who have provided a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated against COVID-19
 - The number who have completed an educational session
 - The total number that this policy applies to
2. Upon request, disclose the statistical information to the Ministry of Health and other regulators as required.

REFERENCES

[Section 25\(2\)\(h\) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

[Confidentiality of Employee Health Files Policy](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety – Duties and Responsibilities Policy](#)

[Appendix A: COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Form](#)

[Appendix B: Creed/Religious Beliefs Exemption Form](#)