

This document is continuously updated - please see questions marked **\*UPDATED\*** or **\*NEW\***

## **POLICY BACKGROUND**

As an employer with a strong commitment to health and safety, the City of Edmonton will take every reasonable step to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others from the hazard of COVID-19. The City has determined that it is necessary for the protection of its workplace to maximize COVID-19 vaccination rates of its employees as a further control measure in mitigating the hazard of COVID-19.

[Administrative Policy A 1701: COVID-19 Vaccination](#), and its related [Procedure](#), outline the requirement for employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless exempt on the basis of a protected legal ground.

## **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POLICY**

### **Who does this policy apply to?**

All individuals who work, in any capacity, or volunteer for the City of Edmonton are required to follow this policy. This Policy applies to individuals who are employed by the City of Edmonton on any basis, including full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary, and casual, and also includes volunteers. Also, new employees hired after the implementation of this Policy will be required to be fully vaccinated or to have an approved exemption before beginning work with the City of Edmonton.

### **Why is the City introducing a COVID-19 vaccination policy?**

Since the launch of the Provincial vaccination program, the City has encouraged employees to make an informed choice on vaccination and strongly encouraged participation by all employees who are able to be vaccinated, including paid leave to receive the vaccine. At the same time, the City has maintained a number of layered workplace controls to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

As provincial COVID-19 cases continue to increase and hospitals across Alberta face unprecedented capacity, the Province has declared a state of public health emergency. Given the data, the circumstances in Alberta, and the information gathered on the vaccination rates of employees through the Administrative Policy and Procedure A1700: *Employee COVID-19 Vaccination Disclosure*, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) determined that it is necessary to implement a COVID-19 vaccination policy as another layer to the City's workplace controls against the hazard of COVID-19.

## **VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TEMPORARY AND/OR PROVISIONAL EMPLOYEES INCLUDING RECALLS AND STAFF SUPPORT\*New\***

**QUESTION: Is the City's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and Procedure still in effect? \*NEW\***

Yes. Both the [Policy](#) and the [Procedure](#) are scheduled to be reviewed in September 2022.

**QUESTION: Does a Temporary and/or Provisional employee need to be vaccinated in order to return to employment with the City for a future job opportunity? \*NEW\***

If the individual is currently on a recall list (i.e. has recall rights under the collective agreement) they have a continuing employment relationship with the employer, so this does not create a new requirement to be fully vaccinated. If they are recalled or secure a different position prior to their recall rights expiring, they will be subject to the Rapid Testing Program if they are not fully vaccinated upon their return. Note that the Rapid Testing Program was suspended on April 1, 2022, but may be reinstated on one week's notice.

If the individual was a temporary employee who did not have recall rights following the end of their temporary role or their termination, they do not have a continuing employment relationship with the employer. Therefore, they DO have to be fully vaccinated if and before they are re-hired at a later date (like any new employee would).

**QUESTION: When an employee (temporary or otherwise) is laterally transferred, promoted or demoted to another position within the organization, do they have to be fully vaccinated in order to be 'hired' into this new role? \*NEW\***

No. The individual is not a new employee. The employee is assuming a new position within the organization and this does not create a new requirement to be fully vaccinated. They continue to be subject to the Rapid Testing Program if they are not fully vaccinated. Note that the Rapid Testing Program was suspended on April 1, 2022, but may be reinstated on one week's notice.

**QUESTION: Does a Staff Support employee need to be vaccinated in order to remain in the Staff Support Pool and to be offered new Staff Support assignments? \*NEW\***

If the individual is currently in the Staff Support Pool (i.e. they are an active employee in the pool) they have a continuing employment relationship with the employer. Therefore, they continue to be subject to the Rapid Testing Program (if/when it is in effect) if they are not fully vaccinated when they are assigned new staff support assignments. Note that the Rapid Testing Program was suspended on April 1, 2022, but may be reinstated on one week's notice.

If the Staff Support employee is not an active employee in the pool (i.e. employment with Staff Support was terminated) they do not have a continuing employment relationship with the employer

and therefore, they DO have to be fully vaccinated if and before they are re-hired later (like any new employee would).

**Are contractors required to follow this policy? \*UPDATED\***

The COVID-19 Vaccination Policy applies only to City of Edmonton employees and volunteers (as described above). The City has sent a notice to contractors it does business with to strongly encourage them to implement a vaccination policy for their employees. Many have already confirmed they have a policy in place. The City will not be requiring proof of vaccination from its contractors, suppliers or partners at this time, but we expect that all workers on our sites continue to adhere to all legislated public health restrictions including physical distancing, masking and not attending the worksite while experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

**Do employees on short term, long term or extended leaves (e.g. parental) leave need to comply with this policy? \*NEW\***

All employees regardless of leave status will be required to adhere to the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and will be required to provide proof of being fully vaccinated prior to their start date of work returning from their leave. If the employee is not fully vaccinated as of the time their respective leave has expired, they will be required to participate in the City's rapid testing program at their own cost.

**What does it mean to be fully vaccinated?**

An employee is fully vaccinated within the meaning of the Policy once they have received all required doses of a COVID-19 vaccine series and at least two (2) weeks have passed following receipt of the final dose.

**Does the City have the authority to collect my personal information?**

All public bodies, including the City of Edmonton, can collect personal information where that information relates directly to and is necessary for an operating program or activity. The City has determined that it is necessary to require employees to be vaccinated in order to protect the workplace and mitigate the hazard of COVID-19. Once collected, the City has a statutory duty to protect the confidentiality of that information and to only use it as permitted by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP Act). We will fully comply with all of our obligations under the FOIP Act, and the information will be securely destroyed once it is no longer needed.

**Do you have to comply with the Health Information Act when collecting this information?**

The City is not subject to the *Health Information Act* and will maintain this information in accordance with the FOIP Act. The personal information collected will be managed and protected in accordance with the FOIP Act. This information will only be used to the extent necessary for implementation of this Policy, health and safety protocols, and infection and prevention control measures in the workplace. Only those staff required to review this information for the purposes of determining policy compliance will see this information.

**How long will this policy be in effect for?**

This policy is in effect as of September 20, 2021. It is scheduled for review in March 2022. It may be reviewed and revised sooner if circumstances warrant.

**I am vaccinated but I don't feel I should have to provide my immunization record. Do I have to submit it?**

This Policy requires all employees to provide proof of vaccination. The City requires this information in order to determine whether the Policy is being followed. If an employee does not submit proof of vaccination they will be required to comply with COVID-19 rapid antigen testing requirements at their own cost.

**For unionized employees, did you engage with the unions when developing this policy?**

The City provided advance information to its unions about the Policy. If you have questions regarding your union's position on the Policy, please speak with your union representative.

**What happens if I am not fully vaccinated by November 15?**

Employees who are not fully vaccinated by November 15, 2021 will need to comply with ongoing COVID-19 rapid antigen testing up to twice per week (frequency to be determined at the City's discretion) at the employee's own cost. The City is developing further information on the process for rapid testing and details will be provided before November.

**Will my health benefits cover personal expenses for COVID-19 rapid testing? \*NEW\***

No, the COVID-19 rapid testing under this Policy is not an eligible expense under the City's health benefits plans. Alberta Blue Cross only covers rapid testing under health care spending or wellness accounts when it is submitted with a physician's written order.

**What happens if I am not vaccinated and do not attend for COVID-19 rapid antigen testing?**

Employees who are not fully vaccinated by November 15, 2021 and do not attend rapid antigen testing through the City's designated process will be placed on leave without pay. The placement of an employee on leave without pay in accordance with the Policy does not prevent the City from ending the employment relationship on a non-culpable or culpable basis where individual circumstances warrant.

**Will I still receive health & welfare benefits if I am placed on a leave without pay? \*NEW\***

Should an employee be placed on a Leave Without Pay for a period of longer than 10 days, the employee will have the option to continue their benefit coverage at their own cost. This means that for a leave that will last longer than 10 days the employee would be responsible to pay both the employee and the employer portions of the premiums in order for benefit coverage to continue for the duration of the leave.

It is important that the employee contact Employee Benefits before the leave starts, to ensure they have communicated their choice to avoid unintentional discontinuation of their benefits coverage.

**What happens to my pension during a leave without pay? \*NEW\***

Employees who return to work will be able to purchase the leave of absence period upon their return. Payment of the employer share of the premiums is subject to Local Authorities Pension plan regulations.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROCEDURE**

**When do I have to be fully vaccinated?**

All City of Edmonton employees are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by **November 15, 2021**. For a two-dose vaccine series, employees must receive one dose of COVID-19 vaccine by **September 30, 2021** and the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine by **October 31, 2021**. Employees hired after the implementation of this Policy will be required to be fully vaccinated or to have an approved exemption before beginning work with the City of Edmonton.

### **When do I have to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination?**

By **October 8, 2021**, employees must provide proof of all COVID-19 vaccine doses received to date. Proof of two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine must be submitted **by October 31, 2021**.

### **What proof of vaccination do I have to provide?**

Employees must provide a copy of their COVID-19 immunization record (that shows their name) along with their employee ID number, electronically or by mail or facsimile. The date of vaccination, type and dose will be recorded and kept on file in accordance with retention and disposition schedules. The copy of the immunization record is transitory and will be destroyed within 30 days of review of the immunization record.

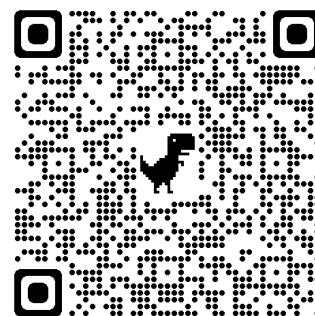
The following forms of COVID-19 immunization records will be accepted in either Google Doc, PDF, JPEG, fax, or paper format (including screenshots or photos of records) as long as it shows the employee's full name, type of vaccination, manufacturer, and date received:

- MyHealth Records COVID-19 Immunization record
- Copy of paper record received at time of COVID-19 immunization
- Email confirmation of COVID-19 immunization from your pharmacy

### **To submit your proof of vaccination electronically:**

Access the [COVID-19 Vaccination Intake Google form](#) - you will need to sign in to a Google email (Gmail) account to fill out the form. If you have challenges signing in, please submit your proof of vaccination by fax or mail (instructions listed below). Proof of vaccination will NOT be accepted by email.

- Fill out the form with your full name and employee ID along with your COVID-19 vaccination status, type of vaccines received and the date of vaccination.
- Upload a copy of your proof of vaccination into the form and submit.
- You may request a receipt of your submission for your records.



### **To submit your proof of vaccination by fax or mail:**

- Fill out the [COVID-19 Vaccination Intake Printable form](#) with your full name, employee ID, phone number and email address along with your COVID-19 vaccination status, type of vaccines received and the date of vaccination.
- Fax or mail your completed form along with copies of your proof of vaccination to:
  - Mail: Occupational Health Team, Workforce Safety & Employee Health  
11th Floor Century Place, 9803 102A Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3A3

- Fax: 780-498-7076
- Employees may use the City's inter-office mail to submit their proof of vaccination. Please mark the envelope confidential.

### **Who is collecting and will have access to employee vaccination records? \*New\***

The Occupational Health team is collecting the vaccination records. Access to employee records is limited to those performing the verification of proof of vaccination and reporting functions. Employee records will be updated into the Cority database after the verification and reporting process is complete.

### **What if I am currently partially vaccinated? How do I update my submission to include my second dose?**

To update your employee vaccination record, please submit your second dose through the COVID-19 Vaccination Intake form process listed above.

### **How do I access my COVID-19 vaccination record?**

Access your record through the [Alberta Vaccine Record Service](#). You will need to have your personal health care number, but do not need an account to access your record.

### **I've lost the documentation for my first dose. What if I can only find proof of my second dose?**

Please enter the information about your first dose on the form to the best of your knowledge and submit the proof of vaccination for your second dose. Submitting proof of your second dose will show that you are fully vaccinated. Please ensure the proof you submit indicates clearly that you have received your second dose.

### **Can I show my supervisor my vaccination record instead of submitting the form?**

No, all proof of vaccination records must be submitted by form and verified. The vaccination information will be retained on your file and the proof of vaccination is required to verify that information.

### **If I am unvaccinated, do I fill out the form?**

No. The purpose of the form is to confirm the details of COVID-19 vaccinations received to date. If you have not been vaccinated, you do not complete this form until you have received a COVID-19 vaccination.

### **How can I get vaccinated?**

Visit the Government of Alberta's [COVID-19 vaccines and records page](#) where you can find information on booking an appointment with Alberta Health Services or a pharmacy, find a walk-in clinic, or find a doctor's office.

### **Am I able to take time off work to be vaccinated?**

Employees can take up to three hours off as paid time during the work day to get a COVID-19 vaccine dose. Employees must provide advance notice to their supervisor. In Peoplesoft, use MDL code (for permanent employees) or LWP (for non-permanent employees) to enter up to 3 hours of time off.

### Where can I find more information on vaccinations?

For those employees that are not vaccinated to date, we are strongly encouraging them to follow Alberta Health Services' recommendations for people who may have hesitations in receiving a COVID-19 vaccine to visit their family physician or call 811 to learn further about the COVID-19 vaccines from the appropriate experts in this regard. You can take this [letter](#) to help guide the conversation with your physician. Employees may also learn more about vaccine safety and effectiveness at this [Alberta Health Vaccine myths and facts site](#).

### What if I have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past? Is this the same as being vaccinated?

Employees are required to be vaccinated under this Policy regardless of a past positive COVID-19 test. Advice from public health agencies is that eligible individuals who have had the virus should get immunized to provide the best possible protection.

### Do I stop coming to work if I am not vaccinated?

No. Employees continue to attend work in advance of **November 15, 2021**. For those who are not vaccinated, they are given the time to gather the information they may need to get vaccinated and understand how it will help protect themselves and others in the workplace.

### Can I continue to work from home so I do not have to be vaccinated?

The majority of the City's workforce is unable to work remotely due to the nature of their occupation. Employees in the temporary work from home arrangement or hybrid work arrangements are still expected to attend the workplace and they are required to be fully vaccinated. All employees, therefore, are required to comply with this policy.

### What if there is a reason I am not able to be vaccinated? **\*Updated\***

An employee may request an exemption from the requirement to be fully vaccinated by submitting a [request for exemption](#) on the basis of a protected legal ground, which may include:

- a sincerely held religious belief which prohibits the employee from receiving a COVID-19 vaccine (accompanied by a sworn or affirmed declaration of that belief); or
- a medical condition which prevents the employee from safely receiving a COVID-19 Vaccine (accompanied by medical documentation from a physician licensed to practice in Alberta confirming that the employee cannot safely receive a COVID-19 vaccine and the anticipated duration of the required exemption).

Request for exemption forms must be submitted by **October 8, 2021**. Employees with an approved exemption will be accommodated as per the City's accommodation policies, procedure and framework.

### Does being vaccinated exempt me from pre-shift screening, wearing a mask and/or physical distancing while in my workplace?

No. Employees who are fully vaccinated or who have an approved exemption are still required to adhere to all other City of Edmonton workplace COVID-19 hazard controls.

### I am feeling stressed. What supports are available to help me? **\*Updated\***

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented challenge that we are all facing together. There have been many changes in both our personal and work lives that have been stressful and required us to adapt and manage as best we can. It has been far from easy.

The City has [supports available](#) if you are feeling stress, anxiety, or overwhelmed by [COVID-19](#) or anything else that is going on for you in your life. Keep in mind that reaching out for support and assistance is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength and your commitment to your health and well being. For more information, access the City's [Wellness Resources](#) or contact:

- LifeWorks Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) - 1-855-789-7289
- John Dowds, Lead Chaplain & Senior Mental Health Consultant - 780-496-7863
- Peer Support Team in your area

**Is a Notice of Liability/Informed Consent letter relevant to this Policy? \*New\***

Organizations such as AHS and pharmacies that administer COVID-19 vaccinations are responsible to ensure that they receive informed consent. As such, the City of Edmonton is not responsible for and will not be responding to requests alleging further information be provided to employees before they provide informed consent to vaccination and comply with this Policy. Additionally, if employees require further information about the COVID-19 vaccines including benefits and risks, the City strongly encourages employees to consult their physician.

Notwithstanding an employee's personal request for a 'notice of liability' or 'informed consent letter' from the City, under the City's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy employees who are not fully vaccinated by November 15, 2021 must comply with ongoing COVID-19 rapid antigen testing up to twice per week at the employee's own cost, through the City's designated process, or will be placed on leave without pay.

**Do I need to submit my vaccination record with the QR code Alberta Health released? \*New\***

No, if you submitted your vaccination record already, you do not need to submit a new one with the QR code. The City does not require the QR code for the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.