

Frequently Asked Questions: Employee Mandatory Vaccination Policy

Under [Administrative Instruction 593](#), the City of Oakland’s Employee Mandatory Vaccination Policy, the City requires **all City employees to receive their final COVID-19 vaccine dose on or before November 15, 2021.**

We hope this FAQ addresses questions about the policy. If you need further clarification, please contact Risk Management at (510) 238-7165.

Compliance with the Policy and Vaccination Deadlines

- **How do I comply with the [Employee Mandatory Vaccination Policy](#)?**
Get your final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine or request a medical or religious exemption by November 15, 2021, and report your status through the [Oakland Vaccination Portal \(https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/\)](https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/).
- **What if I cannot be vaccinated because of a medical condition or because my religion prohibits it?**
Employees with a medical condition or other medical restriction that affects their eligibility for a vaccine, as verified by their medical provider, or those with a sincerely held religious belief that prohibits them from receiving a vaccine, may request an exemption through the [Oakland Vaccination Portal \(https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/\)](https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/). Requests for exemption must be submitted on or before **November 15, 2021**. Exemption requests will be processed by Risk Management under applicable law as a request for reasonable accommodation.
- **When do I need to get my vaccination doses to meet the deadline?**
For the vaccines that require two doses (Pfizer/Comirnaty and Moderna), the deadline for beginning the two-dose series is rapidly approaching, as shown in the chart below:

Vaccine Type	Deadline for 1 st Shot	Deadline for 2 nd Shot	Fully Vaccinated	NOTES
Moderna	10/18	11/15	11/29	2-dose series, 4 weeks apart
Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty)	10/25	11/15	11/29	2-dose series, 3 weeks apart
Johnson & Johnson	11/15	N/A	11/29	1 dose only

- **What happens if I only have one shot of a two-shot series (Pfizer/Comirnaty or Moderna) by November 15?**
 If you don't receive both doses of a two-shot series by November 15, you won't be considered "fully vaccinated" by November 29, in violation of the policy. Failure to comply with this policy shall result in discharge for failure to meet a condition of employment.
- **What does "fully vaccinated" mean?**
 Under the current Cal/OSHA definition, employees are considered fully vaccinated: 14 days after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer/Comirnaty or Moderna vaccines, or 14 days after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's vaccine.
- **What happens if I choose not to get vaccinated and also do not apply for an exemption?**
 If an employee is not vaccinated and does not apply for a medical or religious exemption to excuse them from the vaccination requirement on or before November 15, 2021, then the employee has failed to comply with the policy. Failure to comply with this policy will result in discharge for failure to meet a condition of employment.
- **Will employees be fired if they don't comply?**
 Yes. Failure to comply with this policy shall result in discharge for failure to meet a condition of employment.
- **What does "discharge" mean?**
 For purposes of the policy, the term "discharge" means termination of employment for failing to meet the minimum requirements needed to work for the City of Oakland.
- **Will there be a grace period if I don't get my final dose of vaccine by November 15?**
 No. The City will not be granting a grace period to comply with the policy. Unless excused through an approved reasonable accommodation request, all employees must comply with the requirement to be fully vaccinated by November 29, 2021, and submit documentation vaccination status no later than November 15, 2021.
- **What is the process for discharging any employee who does not comply with the policy?**
 Permanent Civil Service employees who do not comply with the policy will receive a Notice of Intent to Terminate their employment, be placed on administrative leave, and provided a due process Skelly hearing before the final determination and notice of discharge is issued. Non Civil Service employees, which include at-will, probationary, temporary part-time (SI1), ELDE, TSCE, interns, and volunteers will be issued a Notice of Termination for failure to comply with the policy.
- **If I don't get vaccinated, how long will it take before I'm discharged?**
 The notification process will begin immediately. Permanent Civil Service employees will be afforded a due process Skelly hearing before the final determination is made regarding termination of employment. Non Civil Service employees will be notified of termination immediately after non-compliance with the policy is confirmed by the City.

Exemptions

- **How do I apply for an exemption from the vaccine requirement?**

Employees with a medical condition or other medical restriction that affects their eligibility for a vaccine, as verified by their medical provider, or those with a sincerely held religious belief that prohibits them from receiving a vaccine, may request an exemption through the [Oakland Vaccination Portal](https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/) (<https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/>) to be excused from this vaccination requirement. **Requests for accommodation must be submitted on or before November 15, 2021.**

The City will review requests for accommodation on a case by-case basis consistent with existing procedures for reasonable accommodation requests. Among the accommodations, the City may consider mandatory periodic testing at least once per week. No employee will be discriminated against or retaliated against for seeking or obtaining a vaccination exemption.

- **Can I choose to get regular COVID-19 testing instead of getting the vaccine?**

No, the City will engage in the accommodations process, which may result in regular testing for approved exemption applications only. All employees not qualifying for an exemption under this policy must be fully vaccinated.

- **What if my exemption request is denied?**

The City will engage in the interactive process for exemption requests—this allows for back-and-forth conversation regarding accommodations between the employee (and representatives if desired) and the City.

General Questions

- **Does it matter which of the three vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna , or Johnson & Johnson) I get?**

No, as long as you meet the November 15 deadline to report your vaccination status and be considered fully vaccinated by November 29, 2021, the City will accept any of the three COVID-19 vaccines.

- **What if I've already have COVID-19 and have recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated?**

Yes. Under the policy you must still get vaccinated unless your medical provider has advised that you have a condition that prevents you from getting the vaccine (which would be processed as a medical exemption).

According to the [CDC](#):

*“You should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. Evidence is emerging that people **get better protection by being fully vaccinated** compared with having had COVID-19. One study showed that unvaccinated people who already had COVID-19 are more than 2 times as likely than fully vaccinated people to get COVID-19 again.”*

- **Does this mandatory vaccination policy apply to City contractors working onsite or visitors to City facilities?**

No. It only applies to City employees, interns, and volunteers.

Paid Time Off to Get Vaccinated

- **Can I get vaccinated on City time?**

Yes. The City is allotting 2 hours per shot to each employee to get vaccinated on City time.

- **If I have a reaction to the vaccine, am I allowed to take paid time off?**

Employees may utilize their sick leave for time off if they experience a reaction to the vaccine. Employees may submit a workers' compensation claim by contacting CarivaCare at 1-877-247-5431 to report the injury. Such reports will be evaluated by the City's third-party administrator for workers' compensation according to applicable law.

Where to Get Vaccinated

- **Is the City offering vaccinations to City employees?**

The City of Oakland is making it easy for you to get vaccinated at a FREE walk-up vaccine clinic; no appointment is necessary:

Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Dalziel Building (250 FOP), Lobby

7 days/week until November 30

9 am – 5 pm

Open to Employees AND the Public

- **Do I have to make an appointment to get vaccinated?**

You do not need an appointment to get vaccinated at the City-sponsored clinic listed above. For other alternatives, visit [MyTurn](https://myturn.ca.gov/) at <https://myturn.ca.gov/> or the [Alameda County Public Health Department](https://covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines) <https://covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines> to find vaccine appointments near you, and to see if the specific location you choose requires an appointment.

- **Where can I get vaccinated if I don't get vaccinated at a City-organized location?**

Visit [MyTurn](https://myturn.ca.gov/) at <https://myturn.ca.gov/> or the [Alameda County Public Health Department](https://covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines) <https://covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines> to find vaccine appointments near you.

- **What if I can't make it to one of the City's mobile vaccination clinics?**

If you can't make it to one of the City's mobile vaccination clinics, visit [MyTurn](https://myturn.ca.gov/) at <https://myturn.ca.gov/> or [Alameda County Public Health Department](https://covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines) <https://covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines> to find vaccine appointments near you.

- **Can I get a booster shot at the City's mobile vaccination clinic?**

Information on booster shots will be sent out if they become necessary in accordance with state and federal guidelines. The City is not requiring boosters at this time. If the City will require a booster you will receive at least 10 weeks' advanced notice of such requirement.

Vaccine Safety

- **How do I know the vaccine is safe?**

Below you'll find links to videos and articles from public health and medical experts answering questions about the safety and efficiency of the vaccines:

- ✓ Video from the CDC: [COVID-19 Vaccines: How Do We Know They Are Safe?](#)
- ✓ [Video](#) Q&A hosted by Oakland's own W. Kamau Bell, host of CNN's *United Shades of America*, who talks to doctors about why now is the time to get vaccinated.
- ✓ Article from the Mayo Clinic: [COVID-19 vaccine myths debunked](#).
- ✓ From UCLA: [The COVID vaccines are safe and 7 other things you should know](#).

Oakland Vaccination Portal

- **How do I submit my proof of vaccination?**

The City has launched a secure, confidential online portal that employees will use to digitally upload their proof of vaccination or their exemption request. This information can only be provided using the online tool; no paper submissions will be accepted.

The [Oakland Vaccination Portal](https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/) <https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/> can be accessed by any web-enabled device, including desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and mobile phones. It is a closed, confidential database only accessible by authorized City employees.

To electronically submit your proof of vaccination or exemption request, follow these three easy steps:

1. **Click on this link to access the portal: [City of Oakland Vaccination Portal](https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/)** (<https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/>).

This application works best with the following browsers: Google Chrome, Firefox, Safari, and the latest version of Microsoft Edge.

2. **Enter your Employee ID #**

You can find your Employee ID # on your City ID badge or your payslip. If you have trouble, ask your SPOC for help.

3. **Enter your four-digit access code**

Your 4-digit code is your birth month and date (MMDD); not your birth year. For example, if your birthday is March 13th, your 4-digit code would be 0313.

Click [here](#) for a video that will walk you through instructions for using the portal: [City of Oakland Employee Vaccine Portal Instructions](#).

- **Is the employee portal confidential? Who has access to the data? How is the City ensuring the privacy of the data?**

The portal was developed by the City of Oakland's IT Department and requires your unique employee ID and access code, making it secure and confidential. Vaccination documents submitted by employees will be considered protected health information and will only be accessed by authorized City personnel to comply with applicable law and/or to promote workplace health and safety. The City of Oakland Human Resources Department is responsible for tracking overall City compliance, evaluating vaccination exemptions through the interactive process, and working with departments to process discharge for those employees who fail to comply with the City's vaccination policy.

- **Will my supervisor know my vaccination status?**

Maybe. Your supervisor will only know whether or not you have completed the information required in the Employee Vaccination Portal. If an exemption applies, your supervisor may need to know your status in order to provide a reasonable accommodation.

- **With reports about counterfeit vaccination cards circulating, how will the City establish the legitimacy of the proof of vaccination being reported by employees?**

Employees are required to attest that the information they are uploading is true and correct. The selected Human Resources employees with access to this information will be reviewing the uploaded images of the vaccination cards individually and look for anything out of the ordinary to ensure that it is the authentic vaccination card.

- **How do I access the Employee Vaccination Portal?**

The [Oakland Vaccination Portal https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/](https://apps.oaklandca.gov/VaccinePortal/) requires your unique employee ID and access code, making it secure to log in and upload your vaccination status. You will need your employee ID number and access code along with your vaccination record ready for upload.

Employee ID numbers are located on your pay slip or on your ID badge. Your access code is a four digit number consisting of your birth month and day (MMDD); not your birth year. For example, if you were born on March 13th, your four-digit access code would be 0313. You can contact your department's SPOC if you are unable to locate your ID number or you have trouble logging on to the portal.

- **What if I lost my vaccination card?**

Individual vaccine records are available electronically at <https://myvaccinerecord.cdph.ca.gov/>
The City will accept a screen shot of your vaccination record.

Other Questions

- **Why implement a vaccine mandate now after a year and a half of COVID-19?**

The Delta variant has caused a surge in cases, primarily among unvaccinated individuals. As long as people are unvaccinated, surges will continue. It is being implemented now because of the recent FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine.

- **What if I am on an extended leave of absence and will not be back at work before the vaccination due date?**

Employees must be vaccinated, or have an approved exemption. Employees on an approved long-term leave of absence cannot return to the worksite until they have complied with the policy requirements. Supervisors will be in communication with you while on leave to help with the Employee Vaccination Portal process before you return to work.