

## Employer FAQs about COVID-19 Vaccination

**1. Can we implement a COVID-19 vaccination program for our employees or homebound patients?**

Employers considering implementing a COVID-19 vaccination program need to contact their local health department for guidance. Additional CDC information about a program can be found at:

**COVID 19 Vaccination Provider Requirements and Support** <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccination-provider-support.html> January 7, 2021

**COVID-19 Vaccination-multi resource CDC site:** <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/> December 20, 2020

**Concern about Anaphylaxis After COVID-19 Vaccination-including in Special Populations:** [https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/managing-anaphylaxis.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fvaccines%2Fcovid-19%2Finfo-by-product%2Fpfizer%2Fanaphylaxis-management.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/managing-anaphylaxis.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fvaccines%2Fcovid-19%2Finfo-by-product%2Fpfizer%2Fanaphylaxis-management.html) December 31, 2020

**2. Are there typical employee exemptions for the COVID-19 vaccination?**

Some individuals may be at risk for an adverse reaction because of an allergy to one of the vaccine components or a medical condition. This includes those who are pregnant, and consultation with their provider is recommended as the vaccines have not been tested in pregnant women. Some individuals also may decline vaccination because of a religious belief. Per the CDC, employers offering vaccination to workers should keep a record of the offer to vaccinate and the employee's decision to accept or decline vaccination.

**3. If an employee has already had COVID-19, should they still get vaccinated?**

Yes. Both this disease and the vaccine are new. CDC and the FDA do not know how long protection lasts for those who get infected or those who are vaccinated. CDC recommends offering and recommending vaccination to employees regardless of whether they already had COVID-19.

**4. Should I include contractors and temporary employees in my COVID-19 vaccination plan?**

If you plan to offer vaccination at your office, consider providing vaccination to all individuals regardless of their status as a contract or temporary employee. CDC encourages everyone at your organization to be vaccinated, no matter what their work arrangement is. If you do not plan to offer work site vaccination, consider providing information about options for vaccination in the community.

**5. Can an employer mandate the COVID 19 vaccination as a condition of work? Can an employer ask for proof that an employee has been vaccinated?**

Whether an employer can require, or mandate COVID-19 vaccination is a matter of state or other applicable law. Neither FDA nor the CDC can mandate EUA approved COVID-19 vaccination.

If an employer requires employees to provide proof that they have received COVID-19 vaccinations the **vaccination record card** may be used. The employer cannot mandate any personal medical information be provided as part of the proof.

**6. How can I encourage my employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The CDC provides several resources at the site noted in the footer of this document. They also recommend posting articles in your employee communications (e.g., newsletters, intranet, emails, portals, etc.) about the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and where to get the vaccine in the community.

The CDC also recommends being flexible in human resources policies to encourage vaccination, such as establishing a policy that allows employees to take paid leave to seek COVID-19 vaccination in the community.

**7. What information should employees get before vaccination?**

Vaccination providers are required by law to give recipients information about the vaccine they are receiving and possible side effects, as well as **a vaccination record card** with the name and manufacturer of the vaccine they received and when the second dose of vaccine is required. Flyers with information for employees are available at the CDC website in the footer of this document.

**8. What is recommended if employees call in sick with side effects after the vaccination?**

- In most cases, discomfort from fever or pain is expected and should resolve in 1-3 days after the vaccination. Of note, CDC notes more individual are reporting symptoms after the second dose, and individuals with these symptoms are under 55.
- You should encourage the employee to contact their doctor if:
  - If the redness or tenderness at the injection site increases after 24 hours
  - The fever continues, and request evaluation for COVID 19 testing as they may have been exposed prior to vaccination or before it took effect.
  - Their side effects are worrying them or do not seem to be going away after a few days.

**9. Should employers stagger vaccination schedules for employees to avoid staffing shortages due to vaccine side effects?**

CDC advises that data from COVID-19 vaccine trials indicate that most systemic post-vaccination signs and symptoms are mild to moderate, occur within the first 3 days of vaccination (the day of vaccination and the following 2 days), with most occurring the day after vaccination and resolving within 1–2 days of onset.

Side effects are reported as more frequent and severe following the second dose. At this time, CDC does not know how common these symptoms will be among employees, but do not expect that all employees who experience symptoms following vaccination will need to miss work.

Organizations may consider staggering schedules for employees who receive vaccination so not all employees are vaccinated on the same day. The CDC recommends that the decision to stagger vaccination be based on your organization's specific situation.

**10. Should we tell employees to report vaccine side effects?**

Yes, CDC and FDA encourage the public to report possible side effects (called "adverse events") to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Reporting is now online at <https://vaers.hhs.gov/esub/index.jsp>

CDC also encourages employees to enroll in a new smartphone app called "**v-safe**." CDC uses **v-safe** to check-in on people's health after they receive a COVID-19 vaccine. When employees are vaccinated, they should also receive **v-safe** information telling them how to enroll. Using **v-safe**, CDC sends texts to ask questions about problems or adverse reactions, provides recommendations for people who have had allergic reactions to other vaccines and for those with other types of allergies and reminds people when their next dose is due.

**11. Should we continue to offer influenza vaccination to employees?**

Yes. It is important that everyone is vaccinated to protect themselves from flu this winter. While getting a flu vaccine does not protect against COVID-19, it can prevent people from becoming sick with the flu. The flu is another serious respiratory illness that can cause missed work, hospitalization, and, in some cases, even death.

*Note: People should not get the flu shot or any other shot <14 days of getting the COVID-19 vaccine.*

**12. After employees have been vaccinated, can they stop other preventive measures such as social distancing and wearing masks?**

**No**, CDC recommends continuing to wear a mask, staying 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds, washing hands often, and cleaning high-touch surfaces frequently. Together, getting vaccinated for COVID-19 and following CDC's recommendations offer the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19.

**13. If we vaccinate our employees, can we all return to the office?**

Widespread vaccination (most often interpreted as 70% or more of employees) is only one consideration in returning to the office. It is important to assess your office to identify potential hazards related to COVID-19 including:

- The COVID infection rate in your community (how many infections and how fast it is spreading) and any health department orders for your area.
- The ability of your employees to practice social distancing and other prevention measures, like wearing masks when in the office.