

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and Procedure

Frequently Asked Questions

Who does this policy and procedure apply to?

This policy and procedure applies to all workers, contractors, unpaid students, and volunteers attending functions and facilities within Town operations.

Does this policy and procedure apply to those who are still working from home?

Yes. It is understood that those working from home have always been required to attend a Town workplace as required by their Supervisor, including in the future where those currently working from home may return to the workplace on a more routine basis in a hybrid work model according to Policy S600-41 Off-Site Work Arrangement Policy.

Why is this policy and procedure being put into place?

The Province of Ontario, through *the Occupational Health and Safety Act*, requires that employers ensure a safe workplace environment for all workers.

Full vaccination has been shown to be effective in reducing COVID-19 transmission and protecting vaccinated individuals from severe consequences of COVID-19 and related variants including the Delta variant currently circulating in Ontario.

Given the continuing spread of COVID-19 within Ontario, the compelling data demonstrating a higher incidence of COVID-19 among the unvaccinated population and the increasing levels of contact between individuals as businesses, services, and activities have reopened, it is important for Town staff to be vaccinated to help ensure our workplace remains safe.

To help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, this policy is an important measure that compliments other current workplace health and safety measures in place, which currently includes daily health screening, mandatory face coverings, physical distancing, hand hygiene and enhanced cleaning.

The health and safety of all our staff and all members of the public remain a top priority and the Town is committed to doing our part to help mitigate any future waves of COVID-19. This policy and procedure contributes to those efforts.

When do I have to be fully vaccinated by?

You are required to disclose and provide proof of vaccination status by **October 18, 2021**. For those who remain unvaccinated, you will then need to provide proof of your first dose no later than **November 1, 2021**.

As of **December 10, 2021** you will be required to have received your first and second doses of a COVID-19 vaccine (or one dose of single dose vaccine)

The Town will comply with its human rights obligations and accommodate workers and paid students who are legally entitled to accommodation based on a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption.

I am vaccinated but I don't feel I should have to disclose my vaccination status to the employer. Do I still have to do anything?

By no later than October 18, 2021 you are required to disclose and show proof of vaccination status. The Town requires this information in order to determine whether the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and Procedure are being followed. Information collected by the Town pursuant to the Policy will be protected in accordance with privacy legislation. Should you choose not to disclose then you will be subject to the same consequences of non-compliance as individuals who are not vaccinated. Failure or refusal to adhere to the terms of the policy and/or procedure may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

What type of proof of vaccination will I have to provide?

Proof of vaccination is considered any documentation used by the Ontario Ministry of Health, other province or territory or international equivalent, or a health care provider indicating individual immunization status against the COVID-19 virus including the effective date.

What is the process to disclose vaccination status?

Proof of vaccination or proof of a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption must be sent to Human Resources at blangohr@pelham.ca. Exemption requests must be made using the appropriate form, available through Human Resources.

When will the Town begin requiring proof of vaccination?

No later than October 18, 2021 you are required to disclose and provide proof of vaccination status, or proof of a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption.

Will the Town be retaining proof of my vaccinations?

Copies of the proof of vaccination itself shall not be retained, except for newly hired workers, students or volunteers required to provide proof as a condition of offer of employment or placement.

Do I stop coming into work or delay my return to office if I am not fully vaccinated?

This depends on the circumstances. Please see Human Resources as soon as possible to discuss your options.

All Town staff are required to disclose and provide proof of their vaccination status by October 18, 2021. If you have not been vaccinated or provided proof of vaccination, or provided proof of a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption you will be

required to take additional infection and prevention control measures, including submitting to regular COVID-19 antigen testing and providing proof of a negative test result.

I haven't received both vaccination doses yet. Am I still able to get vaccinated while on work time?

If operationally feasible and with the permission of their immediate supervisor, Town staff can be released on work time to be vaccinated while on-duty, either in the work location or at a designated vaccination site, without loss of compensation or the requirement to use vacation, sick, or lieu time, to a maximum of one day (one shift).

Does being vaccinated exempt me from wearing a mask and/or physical distancing while in my workplace?

No. Vaccination is an additional measure that complements health and safety protocols/policies already in place to further control the spread of COVID-19. You must continue following all workplace health and safety policies and directions, including handwashing, physical distancing, wearing appropriate face coverings and personal protective equipment, regardless of vaccination status.

Can I request a reassignment or transfer so that I don't have to work with someone who is not yet vaccinated?

No. The best course of action in this situation is to continue to follow all of the health and safety precautions and speak to your supervisor and/or Human Resources about your concerns.

Will vaccination status of a worker be disclosed to another worker?

The vaccination status is being collected and maintained in accordance with privacy legislation. This information will only be used to the extent necessary for implementation of this policy, health and safety protocols and infection prevention and control measures in the workplace. Only those staff required to review this information for those purposes and to determine policy compliance will be able to access this information. Workers should not inquire about the vaccination status of another worker.

What if there is a reason that I am not able to get the vaccine?

The Town will comply with its human rights obligations and accommodate workers and paid students who are legally entitled to a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption. Under the Human Rights Code, the Town has an obligation to conduct an individualized assessment of accommodation requests. To be entitled to accommodation, a request must fall within one of the protected grounds listed in the Code.

All accommodation requests require written proof of the need for accommodation. In the case of a medical exemption, the **Medical Exemption to Decline the COVID-19 Vaccine** form is to be completed and provided to Human Resources for their

review and retention.

Accommodation requests for staff who are not able to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine due to a Religion/Creed exemption under the Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, ch.19. must be made by completing the **COVID-19 Vaccine Creed (i.e. Religion) Exemption Request** form and submitting to Human Resources.

Philosophical, personal, moral, ethical or political objections are not a protected ground under the Human Rights Code.

Who sees my medical information related to an exemption request?

The Town will maintain this information in accordance with all privacy legislation. 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 Human Resources will review this information for the purposes of determining policy compliance will see this information.

Will I lose my job if I decide not to get vaccinated?

The focus is on getting the workforce fully vaccinated, subject to bona fide medical and Human Rights Code exemptions. Failure or refusal to adhere to the terms of the policy and/or procedure may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Why can't we just submit to regular testing if we don't want to be vaccinated?

Testing is only another screening tool and has its limitations. Mandatory vaccines focus on primary prevention by eliminating the risk.

The Town has approved my accommodation request under the Human Rights Code. Do I have to submit to additional COVID-19 antigen testing?

Yes, where a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption has been approved, COVID-19 antigen testing and submission of a negative test result is required at regular intervals.

In addition you are required to follow any other safety, infection prevention and control measures directed by your Supervisors as indicated by the most recent Public Health guidelines or required pursuant to your individual accommodation plan.

How do fully vaccinated work with staff who are not vaccinated?

All of the existing health and safety protocols will remain in place to reduce the

risk of transmission in the workplace. This includes screening, physical distancing, face coverings, personal protective equipment and hand hygiene.

Will the Town also be making vaccination mandatory for the clients that we serve in person?

The Town cannot mandate that all of the residents and visitors we serve are vaccinated. That would need to come in the form of a provincial mandate. The Town, for the most part provides essential services to clients or residents in Pelham. When serving clients, all parties must continue to follow all workplace health and safety policies and directions, including handwashing, physical distancing, wearing appropriate face coverings and personal protective equipment, regardless of vaccination status.

If I don't want to get vaccinated, can I just continue to work from home?

No. You need to be vaccinated in accordance with the Policy. All staff are being treated the same, subject to any additional department-specific requirements.

Will new hires to the Town also need to be vaccinated?

Yes, all new hires will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of being hired in accordance with the policy and procedure.

Can we expect more COVID-19 protection measures to come?

The Town will continue to actively monitor all COVID-19 workplace safety measures in place, including this policy and procedure, in light of the evolving public health and legislative context and advice from Public Health experts, and make any amendments necessary, which may include additional or alternate precautions to protect the health and safety of all workers and maintain healthy and safe workplace.