



City of Takoma Park

# Mandatory Vaccination Policy FAQs

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## 1. Why is the City mandating that employees be vaccinated, as a condition of employment?

With the emergence of the highly contagious Omicron variant, COVID-19 continues to pose a very serious health risk, especially to those individuals who are not fully vaccinated. Across the State of Maryland, as of December 22, 2021, there have been 11,255 confirmed deaths associated with the COVID-19 virus. The City's COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Policy (the "Policy") is in the best interest of the City and all employees in order to most effectively address the pandemic. In addition, the mandate complies with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing ETS.

## 2. Who is required to be vaccinated by the Policy and when is the Policy effective?

The Policy requires that all City employees, independent contractors, interns, and temporary workers be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, subject to approved accommodations, including receipt of any additional doses of a COVID-19 vaccine (such as recommended boosters) in a manner and schedule consistent with the CDC guidelines. The Policy is effective January 7, 2022.

## 3. Who is eligible for a reasonable accommodation and how can I request an accommodation?

Employees may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation if they cannot be vaccinated or otherwise comply with the Policy, such as not wearing a face covering, because of a medical reason or sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance. Medical reasons that may support an accommodation include where receipt of a vaccine is medically contraindicated, where medical necessity requires a delay in vaccination, or for those with a disability under applicable law. To request a reasonable accommodation, contact Human Resources at [humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov). Reasonable accommodation forms are available at the City's website: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/human-resources/for-city-employees/>.

## 4. What is the deadline for requesting a reasonable accommodation for current employees?

Requests for exceptions and reasonable accommodations must be initiated by January 12, 2022 by sending a completed form to Human Resources at [humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov). All requests will be handled in accordance with applicable laws and City policies and practices, including applicable collective bargaining agreements, and laws regarding confidentiality of employee medical information.

## 5. When must individuals covered by the Policy provide proof of vaccination?

The deadline for completing the City's COVID-19 Vaccination Form and providing acceptable proof of vaccination is January 7, 2022.

**6. When am I fully vaccinated?**

Individuals are considered fully vaccinated two (2) weeks after receiving the single dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine or two (2) weeks after receiving the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. Those who do not submit proof of vaccination are considered not fully vaccinated. However, employees who provided the City with their vaccination status prior to November 5, 2021 are not required to resubmit proof of vaccination (single dose of single-vaccine regimen or both doses of two-vaccine regimen). All employees and other covered individuals eligible to receive a booster must provide acceptable proof of receipt of a booster consistent with the Policy, even if they previously provided attestation of vaccination status.

**7. Various dates have been communicated to employees regarding the vaccination and testing requirements. What are the dates and what are the requirements?**

As of February 9, 2022, all current employees, including part-time, temporary, and seasonal employees are required to be fully vaccinated. Also effective February 9, 2022, covered persons who are not fully vaccinated must complete mandatory weekly COVID-19 testing pursuant to the Policy.

To be fully vaccinated by February 9, 2022, an employee or other covered person must: (a) obtain the first does of a two-dose vaccine no later than January 19, 2022 (Pfizer) or January 12, 2022 (Moderna); and the second dose no later than February 9, 2022; or (b) obtain one dose of a single dose vaccine no later than February 9, 2022.

January 7, 2022 is the deadline for submitting proof of vaccination, however, covered persons must provide additional documentation if their vaccination status changes after that date.

**8. I have received both doses or a single dose of the J&J vaccine, am I required to test before the two-week post vaccination period runs?**

Yes. If an individual completes the entire primary vaccination series by February 9, 2022, that individual must comply with the testing requirements set forth in this Policy until the two-week post vaccination period is complete.

**9. Can I test in lieu of vaccination?**

No. Testing (*i.e.*, PCR, antigen, etc.) in lieu of vaccination is not an option except for certain employees, namely those who have been approved for an exception/reasonable accommodation. Testing is also permitted for employees who are in the process of becoming fully vaccinated pursuant to the Policy.

## 10. What are the requirements for those who are not fully vaccinated?

The City will require that covered persons who are not fully vaccinated by February 9, 2022 comply with weekly testing requirements. The testing requirement applies to all individuals who are not fully vaccinated, including: (a) those who are not fully vaccinated and have been approved for an exception/reasonable accommodation; (b) are waiting for the two-week post-vaccination period to lapse; or (c) who are in the process of becoming vaccinated.

The testing requirement begins the week of February 7, 2022.

The testing schedule for those who must test in order to comply with the Policy is:

1. Employees/other covered individuals who report to the workplace at least once every seven days:
  - (A) must be tested for COVID-19 at least once every seven days; and
  - (B) must provide documentation of the most recent COVID-19 test result to Human Resources ([humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov)) no later than the seventh day following the date on which the employee last provided a test result.
  
2. Any employee/other covered individual who does not report to the workplace during a period of seven or more days: (*i.e.*, if you are on vacation for a week) do not have to provide a test result during the week in which they are on vacation. These individual must:
  - (A) be tested for COVID-19 within seven days prior to returning to the workplace; and
  - (B) provide documentation of that test result to Human Resources ([humanresources@takomaparmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparmd.gov)) upon return to the workplace.

Test results must be sent to Human Resources at [humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov).

## 11. Where can I obtain testing?

There are multiple testing locations. Some options for free testing can be found at:

- Montgomery County Testing Clinic:  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/testing.html#clinics>
- Prince George's County Site (must work or live in Prince George's County):  
<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/3730/COVID-19-Vaccination>

Employees who choose to get tested during the workday must request time for testing, and the City will generally permit employees time during the workday for testing. To request time off during the workday for testing, email your supervisor with a copy to Human Resources ([humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov)).

## **12. Who must wear a face covering in City facilities?**

All covered persons, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a face covering while indoors at the workplace at all times and outdoors at the workplace when within six feet of another person. All covered persons must also wear a face covering when in a vehicle with another person for work-related purposes.

The OSHA ETS sets forth requirements for face coverings and appropriate face coverings must comply with those requirements. All persons entering City facilities and vehicles, unless approved for an exception/reasonable accommodation, must properly wear a face covering indoors at the workplace (unless alone in an office with the door closed), outdoors at the workplace when within six feet of another person, and when occupying a vehicle with another person for work purposes. Approved masks are KN95 masks, N95 masks, surgical masks cloth masks, and sponge masks meeting the criteria set forth in the Policy. Face coverings must have at least two (2) or more layers of washable, breathable fabric, completely cover the nose and mouth, fit snugly against the sides of your face (without gaps), prevent air from leaking out the top of the mask.

The covered individual is responsible for purchasing the appropriate face covering.

The City has available N95 and KN95 masks for those who request them. The Policy contains the requirements for acceptable face coverings. Additional mask information is available from the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>.

## **13. Is the City requiring covered persons to receive a COVID-19 booster?**

Yes. The CDC currently recommends that persons 18 years and older who: received the Pfizer vaccine, obtain a booster at least six (6) months after completing the primary vaccination series; received the Modern vaccine, obtain a booster at least six (6) months after completing the primary vaccination series; or received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, at least two (2) months after completing the primary vaccination. Covered persons who are eligible for a booster as of January 7, 2022, must obtain the booster by February 9, 2022, and those who are not currently eligible per the CDC guidance must obtain a booster within 60 days of becoming eligible for a booster and must submit acceptable proof to the City via [humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov).

## **14. How do I submit proof of vaccination and what is accepted?**

All employees and other covered individuals must provide to Human Resources ([humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov)) their vaccination status by January 7, 2022. This requirement applies to all employees, whether they are fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, unvaccinated, requesting an exception/reasonable accommodation, approved for an exception/reasonable accommodation, or eligible for / have received a booster. The deadline to provide information is January 7, 2022 and ongoing for those whose vaccination status changes.

Employees who provided the City with their vaccination status prior to November 5, 2021 need not resubmit proof of vaccination (single dose of single-vaccine regimen or both doses of two-vaccine regimen). However, employees who previously provided vaccination status to the City must provide the City ([humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov)) proof of receipt of a booster by February 9, 2022, if currently eligible for a booster, and within 60 days of when the employees become eligible for a booster, if not currently eligible.

The following are acceptable forms of proof of vaccination per the OSHA ETS:

1. The record of immunization from a healthcare provider or pharmacy;
2. A copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card;
3. A copy of medical records documenting the vaccination;
4. A copy of immunization records from a public health, state, or tribal immunization information system; or
5. A copy of any other official documentation that contains the type of vaccine administered, date(s) of administration, and the name of the healthcare professional(s) or clinic site(s) administering the vaccine(s).

The Policy details the specific information that must be provided. The City has also created a form for employees to use when submitting documentation and for those who cannot locate proof of documentation. These forms are available at <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/human-resources/for-city-employees/>.

**15. Where can I find more information about how the COVID-19 vaccine works to mitigate serious illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths?**

The CDC website has helpful information regarding COVID-19, the available vaccinations, testing, and other guidance. Please see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html> for more information.

In addition, OSHA has developed FAQs and helpful guidance regarding the ETS. Please see <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/ets2> for more information.

**16. If I am vaccinated during my work schedule, do I have to use my personal leave?**

No. Effective immediately, the City is providing paid time for employees to obtain vaccination. Employees may take up to four (4) hours of work time during the work day per dose to receive vaccination and a booster. This time includes travel to and from the vaccination site and receipt of vaccination/booster.

This means that the City will provide up to eight (8) hours of paid time during the workday for employees to be vaccinated with two (2) doses, up to four (4) hours for a single dose regimen, and an additional four (4) hours for a booster. Note: if an employee spends less time getting the vaccine/booster, only the necessary amount of paid time will be granted.

Employees who take longer than four (4) hours to get the vaccine/booster must send their supervisor an email (with a copy to [humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov)) documenting the reason for the additional time (*i.e.*, they may need to travel long distances to get the vaccine; unusual delays in getting to/from the vaccination site; long waiting time at the vaccination site). The City will treat additional time beyond four (4) hours per dose, if reasonable, as unpaid time, and employees may voluntarily choose to use available leave (*i.e.*, sick leave or annual leave) for that time.

However, if an employee is vaccinated outside of their approved working time they will not be compensated.

### **17. What do I do if I have side effects following vaccination?**

Effective immediately, employees may utilize up to two (2) workdays of sick leave, if needed, because of side effects from the COVID-19 vaccination/booster that prevent them from working. Employees must submit leave time per the normal leave request process via Kronos.

Employees who have no sick leave will be granted up to two days of additional sick leave immediately following each dose (including booster), if necessary. Employees who have no sick leave must contact Human Resources ([humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov)) and will be granted up to two (2) additional sick leave days immediately following each dose, if necessary.

Employees may also follow the process for using leave available in the sick leave bank, consistent with City policy and applicable collective bargaining agreement.

### **18. What is the Policy for employees who have tested positive for, been diagnosed with, or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?**

Effective January 7, 2022, employees must promptly notify Human Resources when they have tested positive for COVID-19, have been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a licensed healthcare provider, and/or are experiencing symptoms while at home or at work.

Employees who receive a positive COVID-19 test while at work on City premises, must immediately leave City premises and contact Human Resources ([humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov)).

No covered individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, has been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a licensed healthcare provider, and/or is experiencing symptoms is permitted to enter City facilities or vehicles or interact in person with City employees.

### **19. Is telework available for employees who test positive for COVID-19?**

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 but are telework eligible and feel well, may work remotely during their isolation period. Employees who are not telework eligible and/or

are not feeling well, should utilize sick leave, annual leave or personal leave during the isolation period.

**20. What are the City's isolation/quarantine procedures?**

Human Resources will work with impacted employees to determine their in-person return to work date. Because the guidance is periodically updated, the guidance is not recited here. Review the Policy for current procedures.

Employees may use available existing leave, in accordance with applicable policies, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements, while in quarantine or isolation.

**21. If I am approved for a religious or medical exemption, do I have to use my personal leave if I elect to be tested during my work schedule?**

Employees who are approved for a religious or medical exemption and elect to be tested during their work schedule will need to request time for testing and the City will generally permit employees time during the workday for testing. To request time off during the workday for testing, email your supervisor with a copy to Human Resources ([humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov)).

**22. If I am approved for a medical or religious exemption, will I be required to pay for my weekly COVID-19 test?**

Employees who are approved for a medical exemption will not be responsible for the cost of their weekly COVID-19 tests. The City will consider religious exemption requests and engage in the interactive process with employees regarding such requests. Please visit the following website for free testing locations: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/testing](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/testing).

**23. If I am approved for a religious or medical exemption, and therefore required to submit weekly COVID-19 test results, what types of COVID-19 tests are acceptable?**

The City will accept the rapid or PCR tests that are conducted at a professionally licensed healthcare facility or a local, county or state government run testing site when the specimen is provided no later than 7-days prior to the date the test is due.

**24. What is the process for requesting a medical or religious exemption?**

The City recognizes that some employees will need a religious or medical accommodation and will not be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Therefore, employees or other covered individuals may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation if they cannot be vaccinated and/or otherwise comply with the Policy because of a medical reason (*i.e.*, contraindication of vaccination, underlying medical reason, disability) or sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance.

Requests for exceptions and reasonable accommodations must be initiated by January 10, 2022. A copy of the City's reasonable accommodation forms are available at the City's HR website, [https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/government/human-resources/Forms/Accommodation\\_request\\_form.pdf](https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/government/human-resources/Forms/Accommodation_request_form.pdf).

Each request will be evaluated by the City on an individual basis and in accordance with applicable law. Decisions regarding reasonable accommodations and exceptions are final absent changed circumstances.

**25. If I am exposed to COVID-19 while working onsite, do I have to use my personal leave if required to quarantine?**

Employees who are fully vaccinated or who have been approved for an exception/reasonable accommodation will not be required to use personal leave if required to quarantine and unable to telework during quarantine. Employees who are exposed, but eligible to keep working on site pursuant to CDC guidance are expected to do so. Employees who are telework eligible may telework during a quarantine period, if approved by the City. Employees who are not fully vaccinated (including booster, if eligible) or approved for an exception/reasonable accommodation and who are not working during a quarantine period may use personal leave during the quarantine period.

**26. What guidelines do the City follow for quarantine and isolation?**

For any employee or other covered person removed because they are COVID-19 positive, the City will keep them removed from the workplace/City facilities until the employee/covered individual receives a negative result on a COVID-19 nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) following a positive result on a COVID-19 antigen test if the employee chooses to seek a NAAT test for confirmatory testing; meets the return to work criteria in this Policy; or receives a recommendation to return to work from a licensed healthcare provider.

The City at this time is following the CDC's "Isolation Guidance" as it existed immediately before the December 27, 2021 update. Asymptomatic individuals may return to work once 10 days have passed since the positive test, and symptomatic employees may return to work after all the following are true:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, and
- At least 24 hours have passed with no fever without fever-reducing medication, and
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months and need not delay the end of isolation).

If an employee has severe COVID-19 or an immune disease, the City will follow the guidance of a licensed healthcare provider regarding return to work. The City will continue to monitor applicable guidance and may revise return to work criteria in the future.



**27. What happens if I have received my first dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, but not scheduled for my second dose of the vaccine until after February 9, 2022?**

If a covered person receives their first dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine but isn't scheduled for their second dose until after February 9, 2022, they will be required to submit weekly test results until they are fully vaccinated.

**28. Who do I contact if I experience problems submitting proof of vaccination or test results?**

Contact Human Resources Director Tracy Smith at [tracys@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:tracys@takomaparkmd.gov) or (301) 891-7201. Alternatively, you may email [HumanResources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:HumanResources@takomaparkmd.gov) to reach another member of the Human Resources team.

**29. Does the vaccine mandate apply to employees who are working remotely?**

Yes. The mandate applies to all City employees.

**30. When the booster shot (3rd shot for Moderna & Pfizer and 2nd shot for Johnson & Johnson) becomes available for me, will I be required to provide proof that I've received my booster shot?**

Yes. Those who are eligible for an approved booster must provide proof that you received your booster shot.

**31. Will job postings include information regarding the City's vaccination mandate?**

Yes. The vaccine mandate applies (subject to approved accommodations) to new hires and that information will be shared on job postings and vacancy announcements.

**32. What happens if I do not comply with the vaccination mandate?**

It is in the best interest of the City to protect its employees and the public. The City is committed to doing its part to help mitigate the effect of COVID-19 in the workplace. Employees who do not comply with the Policy are subject to discipline, including discharge, and will be prohibited from reporting to their City worksite or performing City business.

**33. What happens if I'm approved for a religious or medical exemption and I test positive?**

Regardless of your test results, you must still provide weekly results to Human Resources at [humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:humanresources@takomaparkmd.gov). If you test positive for COVID-19, you will be instructed not to report to the worksite and may use available leave while not working. If you are in a telework eligible position, and you feel well enough to work, telework may be an option during this period.

**34. Who do I contact if I have questions about the vaccine mandate?**

Contact Human Resources Director Tracy Smith at [tracys@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:tracys@takomaparkmd.gov) or (301) 891-7201. Alternatively, you may email [HumanResources@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:HumanResources@takomaparkmd.gov) to reach another member of the Human Resources team.