



# Human Resources Department

## COVID-19 Policy

Updated October 23, 2023

### **Summary**

The City of Takoma Park, in order to promote the health and safety of the City workforce, residents, and visitors, adopts this updated COVID-19 Policy (the “Policy”).

The Policy strongly recommends, but no longer requires, that all City employees, elected and appointed officials, committee members, independent contractors, interns, volunteers, and temporary workers be up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations, which includes receipt of any additional doses of a COVID-19 vaccine (*i.e.*, booster) in a manner and schedule consistent with CDC guidance. The Policy also requires that employees and other covered persons follow certain safety protocols as set forth more fully below.

This Policy update is effective **November 3**. The City may modify this Policy based on updated guidance and information regarding COVID-19.

### **Purpose**

Compliance with current CDC guidelines, including up to date vaccination, is a vital tool to reduce the presence and severity of COVID-19 cases in the workplace, in communities, and in the nation as a whole. The City has adopted this Policy update to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and promote the safety and wellbeing of City employees and others.

### **Scope**

This Policy applies to all City employees, elected and appointed officials, committee members, independent contractors, interns, volunteers, and temporary workers.

### **Employee Notification of COVID-19 Diagnosis, Test, or Symptoms**

Employees and other covered individuals 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 ([hrrsupport@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:hrrsupport@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 COVID-19 symptoms is permitted to enter City facilities or vehicles or interact in person with City employees until the applicable time period for returning to work has passed (see below).

Employees who test positive for COVID-19, are diagnosed with COVID-19, or develop COVID-19 symptoms, but are telework eligible and feel well, are expected to work remotely during their isolation period. Employees who are up to date on their COVID-19 vaccination (meaning they have received all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for them, when eligible)<sup>1</sup> but who are required to isolate or quarantine are expected to telework if able during the

<sup>1</sup> The CDC uses the term “up to date” regarding receipt of vaccines and boosters, when eligible. Information regarding vaccine updates is available at the CDC website.



## Human Resources Department COVID-19 Policy

---

quarantine/isolation period. Employees who are not able to telework, either because of symptoms or because their job is not suitable for telework, may use their available paid leave (i.e., sick, annual, or personal leave) during the quarantine/isolation period

Covered individuals can return to work in person after the CDC-recommended time period has passed based on the CDC's quarantine and isolation guidance.

### **Staying Home When Sick**

People who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, must stay home until they can safely return to work. Testing is recommended for people with symptoms of COVID-19 as soon as possible after symptoms begin. If a person with COVID-19 symptoms tests negative for COVID-19, they should consider getting tested for other respiratory illnesses that could be spread to others, such as flu. We will consider information from medical providers and applicable guidance from federal, state, and or local officials with regard to when employees may safely return to work.

### **When to Isolate & Return to Work Criteria**

Regardless of vaccination status, you should isolate from others when you have COVID-19. You should also isolate if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have test results. If your results are positive, follow the full isolation protocols below. If your results are negative, you can end your isolation.

- If you test positive, follow the full isolation protocol: stay home for at least five (5) days and isolate from others in your home. You are likely most infectious during these first five (5) days. Wear a high-quality mask (i.e., N95, KN95)<sup>2</sup> if you must be around others at home and in public.
- If you had no symptoms, you may end isolation after day five (5).
- If you had symptoms and your symptoms are improving, you may end isolation after day five (5) if: you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).
- If your symptoms are not improving, continue to isolate until: you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving.
- If you had symptoms and had moderate illness (you experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing) isolate through day 10.
- In cases of severe illness (hospitalization) or where the individual with symptoms has a weakened immune system, the person should isolate through day 10 and consult their doctor before ending isolation.

Testing should occur at least five (5) full days after your last exposure.

---

<sup>2</sup> High-quality masks or respirators include respirators that meet U.S. or international standards (i.e., N95, KN95), masks that meet a standard (i.e., ASTM), or "procedure" or "surgical"-style masks. KN95 and N95 offer the best protection. They are most effective when they seal tightly to your face. Disposable procedure masks (i.e., surgical masks) are acceptable as long as they have a nose wire. The City does not permit novelty/non-protective coverings, including neck gaiters, scarves, and bandanas, masks with ventilation valves, or face shields as a substitute for high-quality masks (subject to reasonable accommodations).



## Human Resources Department COVID-19 Policy

After you have ended isolation, when you are feeling better (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms improving), wear your high-quality mask (*i.e.*, N95, KN95) through day 10.

If you have access to antigen tests, you may remove your mask prior to day 10 if you have two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart.

### **Community Levels and Corresponding Preventative Measures**

The City's preventative measures correspond to the Community Level for Montgomery County. These measures are listed in the chart below. When the Community Level Changes, the City will shift to the corresponding protocols for that specific level. Status changes and the effective dates of the new corresponding protocols will be announced via email and on the City's website.

COVID-19 Safety Protocols	When COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is <b>LOW</b>	When COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is <b>MEDIUM</b>	When COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level is <b>HIGH</b>
Stay up to date on vaccination.	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
Follow isolation recommendations if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Follow recommendations for what to do if you are exposed to someone with COVID-19.	Yes	Yes	Yes
All covered individuals, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a high-quality mask while indoors at all times unless alone in a private space that is not accessible to the public.	No	No	Yes
All covered individuals, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a high-quality mask while riding in a City vehicle with a least one other person.	No	No	Yes
All covered individuals, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a high-quality mask while outdoors at all times when a minimum of 6 feet of distance cannot be maintained.	No	No	No



## Human Resources Department **COVID-19 Policy**

---

### **Vaccination & Booster Recommendation**

All City employees, independent contractors, interns, volunteers, and temporary workers are strongly encouraged but aren't required to be up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations. An individual is considered "up to date" when they have received all doses in the primary vaccination series and all boosters recommended for them, when eligible.

### **Time to Receive Vaccination**

Employees may take up to four (4) hours of work time during the workday per dose to receive a vaccination and recommended boosters. 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 each booster. 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 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.

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

An employee who is requesting time during the workday to receive a vaccination must email their supervisor with the date and time of their vaccine appointment, with a copy to Human Resources at [hrsupport@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:hrsupport@takomaparkmd.gov).

### **Time to Recover from Vaccination Side Effects**

Employees may use existing accrued 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(s)), if necessary. Employees who have no sick leave must contact Human Resources ([hrsupport@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:hrsupport@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.

### **Additional Safety Protocols**

The City may adopt additional safety protocols based on CDC guidance and guidance from state and local officials, as part of a multi-layered infection control approach.



## Human Resources Department **COVID-19 Policy**

---

### **Reasonable Accommodations**

Employees or other covered individuals may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation if they cannot comply with this Policy because of a medical reason (*i.e.*, contraindication of vaccination, underlying medical reason, disability) or sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance. All such requests will be handled in accordance with applicable laws and the City's reasonable accommodation policy and procedure. A copy of the City's [reasonable accommodation forms](#) are available at the City's HR [website](#). Decisions regarding reasonable accommodations and exceptions are final absent changed circumstances.

### **Protection from Retaliation and Discrimination**

The City will not take adverse action, discriminate, or retaliate against an employee for reporting work-related injuries or illness. Section 11(c) of the OSH Act prohibits employers from discriminating against an employee for exercising rights under the Act. Section 11(c) also protects employees from retaliation for filing an occupational safety or health complaint, reporting a work-related injuries or illness, or otherwise exercising any rights afforded by the OSH Act.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

All medical information collected from individuals, including vaccination information, test results, reasonable accommodation forms and information, and any other information obtained as a result of testing, will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy.

### **Questions**

Please direct any questions regarding this policy to Human Resources ([hrsupport@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:hrsupport@takomaparkmd.gov)).