
	Title:	Vaccine Status Policy		
	Number:	HR-011		
	Revision Date:	Oct. 14, 2021	Approved by:	Council
	Revision Number:		Area:	Corporate
	Document Type:	Policy	Department:	Human Resources

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1.0 Policy Statement

The City of Welland has a duty to promote and continuously improve its working environment to support safety and health under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The City is committed to protecting the health, safety, and resilience of its workforce and the community by representing the overall responsibility to ensure that all necessary preventative and protective measures are taken to prevent workplace and community transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

To help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, this COVID-19 Vaccine Status Policy is an important measure that supports other workplace health and safety controls in place, including daily health screening, mandatory masking, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and enhanced cleaning.


This Policy is in line with Public Health guidance and acknowledges that science and public health considerations will evolve. The City reserves the right to amend the scope of this policy as to meet provincial and federal legislation and to rescind and reinstate restrictions if deemed necessary.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the City of Welland's requirement regarding proof of COVID-19 vaccination and provide direction to employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary, casual, volunteers and students on providing proof of vaccination or a bona fide exemption and conditions for attending work without vaccination.


In addition, this policy applies to City Council members who wish to attend in-person meetings (including Council and Committee) at City Hall, conduct business on City property or facilities, or attend official events in their capacity as City Councillors.

This policy recognizes that those who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated pose a significantly increased risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 and of spreading the virus to others in the workplace. Ensuring compliance with this Policy contributes to a safer workplace. It is a critical protection for other members of our community and sets a positive example for others to follow as we work together to increase our vaccination rate and drive down infections. Given the critical nature of the municipal services provided by the City to the community, vaccination is also an important measure to support workplace continuity.

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3.0 Definitions

- 3.1. COVID-19** – An infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Genetic variants continue to circulate around the world, are routinely monitored through laboratory studies and epidemiological investigations.
- 3.2. Fully Vaccinated Individual** – Two doses of Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca (including CoviShield) in any combination (the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada); one or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada followed by one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada; three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada.
- 3.3. Immunization** – A process by which a person becomes protected against a disease through vaccination.
- 3.4. Proof of Vaccination** – Documentation issued by the Ontario Ministry of Health, other province or territory, or international equivalent, indicating individual immunization status against the COVID-19 virus that demonstrates they are fully vaccinated.
- 3.5. Medical Exemption** – A medical exemption documented by a physician or nurse practitioner, using the Medical Exemption Form, which includes a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated and the effective time-period for the medical reason. Exemptions include an allergist/immunologist-confirmed, severe allergy or anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, or to any of its components that cannot be mitigated; a diagnosed episode of myocarditis/pericarditis after receipt of a mRNA vaccine.
- 3.6. Human Rights Code Exemption** – Written proof of a bona fide Human Rights Code exemption, using the Vaccination Creed Exemption Form, is an exemption based on "creed" as per the Ontario Human Rights Code; the Code protects personal religious beliefs, practices, or observances. Personal preferences or singular beliefs do not amount to a creed for the purposes of this code.
- 3.7. mRNA Vaccine** – A vaccine that teaches cells how to make a protein that will trigger an immune response. Once triggered, the body makes antibodies. These antibodies help fight the infection if the real virus does enter the body in the future.
- 3.8. Rapid Antigen Screening** – A diagnostic test suitable for point-of-care testing that directly detects the presence or absence of an antigen. It is commonly used for the detection of SARS-CoV-2. Rapid test results generally give results in 5 to 30 minutes.

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3.9. Workplace – Any location that a City employee, or Council member, performs tasks, jobs, and projects on behalf of the City of Welland, and includes but is not limited to City facilities, parks, and job sites.

4.0 Application

This policy applies to all City of Welland employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary, casual, students, and volunteers.

All employees hired after the implementation of this policy, including unpaid students, and volunteers, will be subject to this policy as a condition of their employment or placement with the City of Welland.

Certain provisions of this policy as prescribed also apply to members of City Council who conduct business on City property, or facilities, or attend official events in their capacity as a Councillor.

Those who do not comply with this directive may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Failure to comply also includes providing late, misleading, incomplete, or false information.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Chief Administrative Officer


- Ensure consistent application of this Policy Directive.

5.2. Managers and Supervisors

- Ensure employees are familiar with this Policy Directive.
- Ensure participation of oneself and workers in the proper use of face masks, handwashing, physical distancing, and personal protective equipment regardless of vaccination status.
- Ensure workers are provided access to accurate, sufficient, and appropriate educational materials with respect to COVID-19.

5.3. Employees

- Familiarize themselves with this Policy directive.
- Work in a safe manner as required by the employer and use the prescribed safety equipment and protocols including continued and proper use of face masks, handwashing, physical distancing, and other personal protective equipment regardless of vaccination status.

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- Remain informed about accurate, sufficient, and appropriate educational materials about COVID-19, as it relates to your employment.
- Must comply with this policy and/or any division-specific policies and procedures that apply to them.
- Recognize that Canadian and international human rights laws prohibit discriminatory action, including harassment, against any persons or communities because of an association with COVID-19, perceived or otherwise.

5.4. Human Resources

- Provide accurate, sufficient, and appropriate educational materials to leaders and employees as it relates to COVID-19.
- Ensure all new employment or placement contracts for employees, students, volunteers, and members of Council include proof of COVID-19 vaccination, in compliance with this policy, as a condition of employment, unless protected by medical or human rights exemptions and cannot be reasonably accommodated.
- Ensure any personal, medical information collected from employees is directly related to, and necessary, for the achievement of the policy's goal of ensuring workplace health and safety.
- Ensure the collection of employee personal information is as limited as possible and safeguard and protect unnecessary disclosure.

5.5. Joint Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representatives

- Support the regular review of this policy considering the evolving public health and legislative context and advise from Public Health experts; and make any amendments necessary, which may include additional or alternative precautions to protect the health and safety of all workers and maintain health and safe workplaces.


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6.0 Procedure

6.1. By no later than 3pm on Friday, November 19th, 2021, provide proof of vaccination, as defined in this policy, via email to vaccine@welland.ca. Proof of full vaccination shall be recorded and secured by the Human Resources Department in accordance with the applicable privacy legislation. This information will only be used to the extent necessary for implementation of this policy, for administering health and safety protocols, and infection and prevention control measures in the workplace. To be clear, only Human Resources staff will have access to this email address.

Effective Thursday, December 2nd, 2021, those who have not been fully vaccinated, including those who have provided proof of a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption, and those who have not disclosed vaccination status, will be required to submit regular COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening (RAS), and demonstrate a negative result at a minimum of twice per week, or at more frequent intervals as required by the Employer.

- RAS testing and scheduling will be confirmed and administered through Human Resources. Those required to submit a weekly RAS result will be notified via email.
- RAS test results will be required by 3pm each Monday and Thursday. If your results have not been received by the deadline, you will not be compliant with this policy, and will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence.
- RAS results will only be considered valid if the results have been administered by an approved RAS testing location and completed within 48 hours of the submission date and time.
- If the RAS result is positive, notify HR immediately and do not report to work. A lab confirmed test will be required and the employee will be required to contact Public Health for guidance.
- RAS tests will be paid by the employer until December 31, 2021. A valid receipt must be submitted with the testing result, reimbursement will be up to a maximum of \$40. Effective January 1, 2022, only those who have an approved medical or bona fide Human Rights Code exemption will be eligible to have their RAS paid for by the employer.
- RAS tests must be scheduled and administered outside of working hours.
- The City of Welland will continue to review the RAS testing process in accordance with federal and provincial guidelines.

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6.2. In the case of two-shot vaccines an individual is considered fully vaccinated fourteen (14) days after the second dose has been administered. Employees, students, and volunteers must participate in Rapid Antigen Screening for fourteen (14) days after the second vaccination dose.

6.3. Written proof of a medical exemption, or bona fide Human Rights Code exemption may be provided as follows:

Provide proof of a medical exemption documented by a physician or nurse practitioner, using the Medical Exemption Form, which includes a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated and the effective time-period for the medical reason (i.e., permanent, or time-limited; if time-limited the individual must provide proof of vaccination in accordance with this procedure within 30 days of the medical reason expiring); or

Provide written proof of a bona fide Human Rights Code exemption, using the Vaccination Creed Exemption Form, which includes documented evidence to confirm the requirements for a Creed exemption for the COVID-19 vaccine, and certification from a Religious Leader.


The City will work with those who receive an exemption to ensure they are provided the appropriate resources to develop a reasonable accommodation plan.

Employees, students, or volunteers who receive an approved medical or Creed exemption will be required to follow the City of Welland protocols for Rapid Antigen Screening.

6.4. The City will comply with its obligations under the Human Rights Code and accommodate those who are legally entitled to accommodation in accordance with the City's established procedures. Everyone is encouraged to read the Ontario Human Rights Commission (Questions and Answers) summary prior to submitting an accommodation and to learn more about an individual's rights and obligations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City of Welland reserves the right to request additional documentation supporting the need for an exemption.

6.5. Those who provide false documents related to being vaccinated or as part of a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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6.6. Those who are unvaccinated, or who have a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption, may be required to follow additional safety and infection control measures as directed by their manager.

6.7. Members of Council

All members of Council are subject to the terms of this policy. Councillors must provide proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, in accordance with this policy, prior to being permitted to attend in-person meetings (including City Council and Committee meetings) at City Hall, conduct business on City property or facilities, or attending official events in their capacity as Councillors.


6.8. Contractors and Vendors

All contractors and appropriate liaisons having direct in-person interaction with City Staff or members of the Public while working within City owned facilities must provide proof they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, in accordance with this policy, prior to being permitted to perform work or attend site meetings. A declaration on company letterhead attesting each employee has been fully vaccinated may also be accepted at the discretion of the appropriate City Director and / or procurement process.

7.0 Privacy

Information related to an individual’s proof of vaccination status will be held in strict confidence and used only for the specific purposes described in this Policy. After the vaccination status of an individual is confirmed, supporting documentation about an individual’s vaccination status will be permanently deleted and not retained in any format. The City will retain documentation in respect of requests for accommodation only as necessary, which will be held in strict confidence.

The City will at all times comply with applicable privacy laws. The City will also comply with all health and safety laws, which may include cooperating in the investigation of a COVID-19 outbreak.

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8.0 Compliance

The City of Welland reserves the right to modify this policy at any time in its sole discretion to adapt to changing circumstances and business needs, consistent with its commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

Failure or refusal to adhere to the terms of this policy will result in an employee being placed on an unpaid leave of absence for a maximum of six (6) weeks. Vacation, lieu, or other credits may not be used during this leave of absence. Continued failure and refusal to adhere to the terms of this policy will result in further discipline up to and including dismissal.

Revision History

Date	Description of Change	Initials