

Vaccine Mandate FAQ

Who does the vaccine mandate apply to?

The vaccine mandate applies to:

- Nova Scotia Health Authority and IWK Health Centre
- workers in long-term care facilities (licensed and unlicensed) and home-care agencies (publicly and privately funded)
- public school teachers, pre-primary and other school-based staff, regional and board office staff, and those providing services in schools, including cafeteria and school bus services
- Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia
- workers in residential facilities and day programs funded by the Department of Community Services Disability Support Program and adult day programs funded by Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care
- workers in Department of Community Services facilities and those providing placements for children and youth in the care of the Minister of Community Services (excluding foster family placements)
- paramedics, LifeFlight nurses and some other staff at EHS
- correctional officers, youth workers, staff volunteers, visitors, contractors and service providers who work in, or provide service to adult or youth correctional facilities
- early childhood educators and staff in regulated child care, as well as any volunteers, practicum students, or other professionals entering these settings.
- physicians and other service providers to the above organizations; for example hairdressers and contractors

Why aren't other first responders included (police, fire, etc.)?

We're starting with these groups and if we need to expand, or there's a good reason to expand, we will.

Why are you implementing a vaccine mandate?

We are mandating vaccination for specific groups who provide services and supports to some of our most vulnerable citizens, like people in long-term care, patients and children unable to be vaccinated. This is not a decision we take lightly. However, there are tens of thousands of people who have not received any dose of vaccine and we need to do more. This mandate will help keep our community safe.

How is forcing people to get a vaccination legal?

The Chief Medical Officer of Health has legal authority under the Health Protection Act to require people to take action or refrain from taking any action he deems to be necessary to protect citizens against the risk of COVID19 and the spread of this virus. A vaccine mandate falls within the scope of his authority.

Is it a violation of my human rights?

Any action taken by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or requested of others to mitigate the risk of COVID19, takes into consideration human rights. Every measure put in place to protect Nova Scotians from the spread of COVID19 aims to strike a balance between the rights of an individual and the need to protect the public from the risks of this disease.

When does the vaccine mandate become effective?

The vaccine mandate will come into effect November 30, 2021.



When must employees show proof of full vaccination?

Employers will communicate with staff about when and how to show proof of vaccination.

What happens if an employee chooses not to get vaccinated?

Employees who continue to choose not to get fully vaccinated by November 30 will be placed on unpaid administrative leave.

If an employee is partially vaccinated before November 30, are they required to be placed on leave?

An employee who is partially vaccinated before November 30 will have 45 days from the date of their first dose to become fully vaccinated (second dose plus 14 days). They can remain in the workplace during this time but must participate in the mandatory education program.

What does the vaccine mandate mean for employees who cannot get vaccinated?

Any employee who cannot get vaccinated should follow the medical exception process outlined in the [protocol](#). The medical reasons for exception to vaccination are very specific and limited. A medical exception can only be provided by a nurse practitioner or family physician after an assessment.

What happens to an employee who is on a leave of absence and is scheduled to return to work after November 30.

Employees who are on a leave of absence and will return to work after November 30 need to show proof of full vaccination. Partially vaccinated employees can return to work but have 45 days from their first dose to become fully vaccinated (second dose plus 14 days).

If an employee chooses to get vaccinated after November 30, can they return to work with one dose while waiting to receive the second?

If the employee receives their first dose after November 30, they are not to return to work until they are fully vaccinated.

Can an employee be fired?

Termination is an option, but it is a last resort.

How long can an employee be placed on unpaid leave before they can be terminated?

If an employee has not complied by November 30, the employer must place them on unpaid leave until they become fully vaccinated or until their employer chooses to terminate their employment. Continued leave or termination after November 30 is at the discretion of the employer.

Will government provide funding to cover the cost of administrative leaves?

Government will not provide employers with any additional funding to cover administrative leaves of absence related to vaccine status.

What about new hires into these organizations?

Full vaccination will be a hiring condition for new staff.

Are there religious exceptions to vaccine mandate?

Employees covered by the vaccine mandate can request an exception due to a prohibited ground of discrimination under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. The employer needs to have a process to consider it but is not obligated under the protocol to provide it. Employees should speak with their employer.



When does an employee need to take the mandatory education program?

The protocol requires employees to provide proof of vaccination as of October 30. After this date, employees who do not provide their proof will need to take the mandatory education program. If an employee does not take the training and does not produce their proof of vaccination (i.e. proof of one dose or fully vaccinated) by November 30, they will be placed on unpaid administrative leave.

Who is providing the mandatory education program?

The education component is mandatory for those not fully vaccinated and will be provided by the employer. The program at a minimum will include:

- how COVID-19 vaccines work
- vaccine safety related to the development of the COVID-19 vaccines
- the benefits of vaccination
- the risks of not being vaccinated against COVID-19
- the possible side effects of COVID-19 vaccination

Each sector including Education, Community Services, Seniors and Long-Term Care are working with the Nova Scotia Health Authority to access their education materials.

Does the vaccine mandate apply to designated caregivers to long-term care facilities?

Yes. Designated caregivers must be vaccinated in order to enter a long-term care facility. If the individual is only partially vaccinated, they may continue to enter the facility but have 45 days from their first dose to become fully vaccinated (second dose plus 14 days).

Does the vaccine mandate apply to visitors and others who are required to enter a healthcare facility?

Visitors, contractors and other supports who are required to enter a healthcare facility must be fully vaccinated. However, if a child is going to the IWK Health Centre, one parent or support person who is not fully vaccinated can enter with them. Also, an unvaccinated support person can be present for the birth of their child.