



POLICY No. 2021-02

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Originating Department Corporate & Social Services – Human Resources

SMT Approval: 2021-09-09

Council in Committee: N/A

Recommendation #: n/a

Council Approval: 2021-09-21

Resolution #: 116-21

Revision History:

[Click here for revision history](#)

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy is to provide guidelines pertaining to the expectations and requirements of Haldimand County with respect to COVID-19 vaccinations.

The Corporation of Haldimand County is committed to providing a safe working environment and taking every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of our employees, volunteers, elected officials, board appointees and members of the public, from the hazards of COVID-19. A key element to help ensure this protection is by putting in place a program requiring mandatory disclosure of COVID-19 vaccination status by all Haldimand County representatives, as defined in this policy. Haldimand County has a legal duty under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), to take reasonable precautions to protect workplace health and safety, including hazards posed by infectious disease such as COVID-19 and associated variants.

Public Health advice relative to COVID-19 is that vaccinations are safe, highly effective and significantly reduce the risk of serious illness and hospitalization. Haldimand County considers vaccinations to be fundamental to the protection of County representatives and the wider community. This policy recognizes that those who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated pose a significantly increased risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19, may spread the virus to others, resulting in the potential for significant negative impacts on: human health, municipal service continuity, staff shortages and costs to the taxpayer. This policy aims to ensure that the County work space is safe, and promote full vaccination amongst County employees, students, elected officials, board/committee appointees and volunteers in alignment with provincial directives and subject to limited exceptions in accordance with the Human Rights Code (Ontario), consistent with public health policy.

To date, the vaccines available in Canada are currently reported to be between 80% and 95% effective in either preventing infection, or preventing symptoms of COVID-19 in the vaccinated person. Contingent upon vaccine availability, all existing Haldimand County representatives are strongly encouraged to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, unless it is medically contraindicated.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all representatives of the Corporation of Haldimand County including all existing staff, except for those deemed to be high risk for the purposes of this policy (i.e. Grandview Lodge staff and Paramedics who are covered by separate policies), elected officials and board/committee appointees, students, including those on unpaid placements/internships, volunteers, volunteer firefighters and Haldimand County Library Board and its staff and volunteers. The staff groups considered as high-risk are all staff working in the municipal long term care facility, Grandview Lodge, and all staff in the Haldimand County Paramedic Service. These two groups have separate vaccination policies to address the unique circumstances of each respective .

Any new staff, volunteers or students as of the date this policy is in effect, must provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or an eligible exemption, as a condition of employment. Existing staff transferring to a new position as of the date of this policy must also provide proof of full vaccination or eligible exemption.

3. DEFINITIONS

“Haldimand County representative”, for the purposes of this policy, means all Haldimand County staff, elected officials, board/committee appointees, students, including those on unpaid placements/internships, volunteers, volunteer firefighters, Library Board Members, employees and volunteers, except for those employees whose workplace is a high risk congregate setting or healthcare, such as Grandview Lodge and the Haldimand County Paramedic Service. Where the policy indicates “employees” it shall also mean all Haldimand County Representatives, unless a particular group of representatives is mentioned specifically.

“Fully vaccinated”: An individual is considered fully vaccinated if they have received:

- The full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or any combination of such vaccines, or
- One or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or
- Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada;
- Final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine was received at least 14 days before providing the proof of being fully vaccinated.

“Rapid Antigen Test” means a point-of-care rapid antigen test for the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 where the test kit has been obtained from Ontario Health and is taken in accordance with rapid antigen screening guidance.

4. POLICY & PROCEDURE

Mandatory Disclosure of Vaccination Status

Haldimand County requires all employees to disclose their COVID-19 vaccination status through a confidential Vaccination Disclosure Form to the Human Resources Vaccination Team. This online form will be available on the staff intranet. Hard copies are available for those who do not have access to the intranet.

The Vaccination Status Form provides options for disclosure as follows:

- Fully Vaccinated
- Medically Exempted
- Not Fully Vaccinated

For those employees who select “Fully Vaccinated” on the Vaccination Status Form, the Human Resources Vaccination Team may request acceptable proof of vaccination in the form of the receipt or other documentation issued by the Ministry of Health/Public Health, or equivalent out-of-province health body to the person who was vaccinated. For indigenous employees, a vaccination receipt signed by an Indigenous Health Provider is also acceptable proof.

Existing County representatives must disclose their vaccination status to the Human Resources Vaccination Team in accordance with the established process by no later than **Monday, October 18, 2021**. Should an employee’s vaccination status change after Monday, October 18, 2021, the employee is responsible for submitting an updated Vaccination Status Form to the Human Resources Vaccination Team.

Employees also may be required to disclose their vaccination status to the Human Resources Vaccination Team at any time by law or to otherwise give effect to this policy, including, but not limited to, situations where employees are directed to stay home as a result of the daily screening tool in order to comply with the clearance criteria to return to work (e.g. after experiencing symptoms, a COVID-19 exposure, or a travel quarantine exemption).

Rapid Antigen Testing

As of **Tuesday, October 19, 2021**, employees who select “not fully vaccinated” or “medically exempted” on the Vaccination Status Form must participate in regular rapid antigen testing until such time as they are considered fully immunized, if any of the following apply:

- The employee has not received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine (or a single dose in the case of a single dose vaccine series), or it has not been 14 days past their final dose; or
- The employee has not disclosed their vaccination status as required; or
- The employee requires an exemption from receiving the vaccination, subject to limited exceptions in accordance with the Human Rights Code (Ontario), provided that all necessary documentation is submitted and kept updated to substantiate the exemption.

Anyone to whom this policy applies, who does not complete or submit a Vaccination Status Form shall be deemed in non-compliance with this policy and shall, for the purposes of the policy, be deemed as unvaccinated.

Any unvaccinated person to whom this policy applies, working or doing County business 24 hours per week or more, will be required to provide proof of a negative rapid antigen test two (2) times per week to the HR Vaccination Team on the days of the week specified by the HR Vaccination Team. If this requirement is not met, the person will be in non-compliance with this policy and will be on an unpaid leave of absence until proof of a valid negative rapid antigen test is provided.

Any unvaccinated person to whom this policy applies, working or doing County business less than 24 hours per week, will be required to provide proof of a negative rapid antigen test 1 time per week to the HR Vaccination Team on the day of the week specified by the HR Vaccination Team. If this

requirement is not met, the person will be in non-compliance with this policy and will be on an unpaid leave of absence until proof of a valid negative rapid antigen test is provided.

Unvaccinated volunteer firefighters are required to provide proof of a negative rapid antigen test once per week, prior to their respective training night. If a negative rapid antigen test is not produced and submitted within 48 hours prior to the training, the volunteer firefighter will be considered in non-compliance with this policy and will be ineligible to attend at any fire station, or fire call or County facility until such negative rapid antigen test is provided.

A Rapid Antigen Results form (Appendix A) will be completed, dated and witnessed following each rapid test as required. Rapid Antigen Results form must be received by the Human Resource Vaccination team within 48 hours of the test being completed. Test results that exceed 48 hours will not be accepted.

If an employee is deemed unvaccinated without an exemption (as noted above), the employee will be responsible for any cost associated with each rapid antigen test required, or any follow up testing. The cost of the rapid antigen test will be reimbursed for those employees who have submitted the necessary medical exemption documentation and produced adequate receipts for reimbursement (i.e. dates, name of individual, location of testing, agency doing testing, etc.) .

Should any Rapid Antigen Test return as positive, the employee will be required to immediately contact the Human Resource Vaccination Team, their local public health unit and self-isolate until further notice, or follow the direction given by the County or the public health unit. Any person who is required to self-isolate may utilize their available banked time (i.e. flex, vacation, overtime or sick banks).

The time required to be rapid antigen tested will be unpaid time/personal time and mileage will not be eligible if travel is required to receive the test. Sick time is not an eligible use of time for rapid antigen testing. Use of flex, vacation or overtime banks is at the discretion of the relevant General Manager based on operational needs.

Haldimand County otherwise reserves the right to require Rapid Antigen Testing of any employee at any time, if deemed necessary in the provision of a safe work environment.

Maintaining Records and Confidentiality

Haldimand County will maintain vaccination disclosure information, in accordance with privacy principles and any applicable legislation. Vaccination Disclosure Forms and Rapid Antigen Results Forms shall be retained by the Human Resources Vaccination Team, and 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.

Managers and Supervisors will not be provided with specific Vaccination Disclosure responses of individuals, however your Supervisor/Manager will be provided with the safety protocols and requirements that apply to their respective staff members. For operational reasons, HR will have the authorization to notify direct supervisors and Managers on a confidential basis, if a staff member is unable to attend work due to, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- Requirement to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure or a positive test;
- Placed on unpaid leave of absence related to non-compliance to the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy;

- Where disciplinary action is required for non-compliance to policy or where termination is recommended for falsifying information related to the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

New Hires or Transfers

All new employees or employees entering into a new employment contract internally (i.e. transferring positions) must be fully vaccinated or produce an eligible exemption, as a condition of the new employment agreement. Proof of vaccination will be provided to Human Resources prior to commencing new employment, engagement, assignment, or placement. This policy shall form one of the conditions of employment which new employees or employees transferring positions accept as part of their offer of employment.

For Divisions with students working on an unpaid placement/internship, it is the responsibility of the respective Division to notify the Human Resources Vaccination Team of the new student, prior to commencing their engagement, assignment, or placement to ensure the appropriate proof of vaccination is obtained.

For Divisions with volunteers, it is the responsibility of the respective Division to ensure the volunteer, prior to commencing their engagement, assignment, or placement, has completed the Vaccination Disclosure Form and submitted it to the Human Resources Vaccination Team.

Medical Exemption for COVID-19 Vaccination

If an employee has a medical reason for not being vaccinated against COVID-19 they shall disclose the exemption on the Vaccination Disclosure Form. The Employee Wellness Representative will reach out to provide a letter to take to their attending physician to obtain the applicable medical information. It is the employee's responsibility to contact the Employee Wellness Representative to provide a letter to take to their attending physician. Each case will be considered on its own facts, in accordance with any applicable legal obligations under the Human Rights Code. The County will require written proof of a medical reason that sets out, as a minimum, the following:

- i. that the person cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19; and
- ii. the general nature of the medical reason why the person cannot be vaccinated and confirmation that this is a genuine medical condition and not simply the patient's preference or self-evaluation; and
- iii. the effective time period for the medical reason.

This medical information is to be submitted to and retained by the Employee Wellness Representative in a confidential file and shall be managed by the Human Resources Division with periodic follow up as necessary.

The County will work with the employee to determine whether and how an employee may be accommodated, as required, in accordance with the Human Rights Code (Ontario). Without limitation, such measures may include changes to work assignments, work location, as well as regular rapid antigen testing.

Ongoing Monitoring and Assessment of COVID-19 Workplace Safety Measures

Haldimand County will continue to closely monitor its COVID-19 risk mitigation strategy and the evolving public health information and context, to ensure that it continues to optimally protect the

health and safety of its representatives. To that end, and in consultation with Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit (HNHU) and occupational health and safety resources, the County will continue to assess other available workplace risk mitigation measures. If it is determined that additional precautions are necessary, the County may deploy new measures (including at an individual level) to protect all parties from COVID-19, and may amend this policy accordingly and/or communicate the required precautions to those impacted by this policy.

Consequences of Non-Compliance with Policy

Non-compliance with the policy will be managed in accordance with applicable Human Resources policies, collective agreements, legislation and directives.

Falsifying or misrepresentation of information on Vaccination Disclosure Forms, Screening Records, Rapid Antigen Testing Results Forms or other required disclosure forms, will be grounds for dismissal or legal recourse.

Training

All persons to whom this policy applies will have this policy shared with them on, or as soon as possible following, the effective date of this policy. All new hires will have the policy shared with them on their first day of employment, or prior to commencement of first day of employment, where possible.

Any questions about this policy can be directed to covidvaccineteam@haldimandcounty.on.ca

5. APPENDIX

a) Appendix A: Sample Rapid Antigen Results Form

REVISION HISTORY					
REPORT	CIC		COUNCIL		DETAILS
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	



RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING RESULTS FORM

I _____, acknowledge that I have completed the required COVID-19 Antigen Test on this date: _____.

My Test Results:

- POSITIVE RESULT – Notify the HR vaccination team and your supervisor
- NEGATIVE RESULT

Falsifying or misrepresenting information on the Rapid Antigen Testing Results Forms or other required disclosure forms, will be grounds for dismissal or legal recourse.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note: Please attach this document to the results form you were given at the testing site.