

Covid-19 Vaccination Policy

Policy owner:	Chief Executive
Approved by:	Executive Leadership Team
Date approved:	30 December 2021
Version history:	
Date or parameters for review:	Change in legislation and/or 6 months from last review and/or as required.
Applies to:	All workers, including employees, contractors, volunteers, contractors, consultants.
Contact details for further information:	Manager Health and Safety
Location and availability:	HR Documents TRIM number: 21/1745501 Managers and team leaders should ensure this policy is available to those without HUB or Trim access.

1. Introduction

Since early 2020, all countries have been facing a global pandemic as a result of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, known as COVID-19. The virus has undergone genetic mutations over time and some of these mutations can spread more easily than the original virus.

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalisation. However, some infected people suffer a serious illness that requires hospitalisation; results in “long – COVID” illness for an elongated and unknown period of time; and results in death.

An infected person has a very high chance of infecting others with COVID-19. Vaccination and public health and social measures (controls) are critical to limiting transmission of COVID-19 and reducing mortality and morbidity. The Council’s risk assessment identified that there is a significant risk reduction associated with the use of vaccination alongside other controls.

New Zealand followed an elimination strategy to keep the country free from COVID-19 while the population was vulnerable and unvaccinated. With a high proportion of the population now fully vaccinated, the government has transitioned from an elimination strategy to a suppression strategy and acceptance of community transmission of COVID-19.

On 2 December 2021, the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Protection Framework) Order 2021 came into effect. The COVID-19 Protection Framework ([traffic light settings](#)) provides guidance to protect one another, keep our health system running well and ensure businesses remain open while at the three different levels: Green, Orange and Red. It has general settings and restrictions in a range of environments depending on whether a Vaccine Pass is required. It also provides for localised protections to be put in place.

There is an understanding within a suppression strategy that COVID-19 will circulate within the community. When there is community transmission of COVID-19 in Christchurch, we anticipate increased risk of exposure while carrying out our work than previously. Changes to the Auckland boundary settings on Wednesday 15 December 2021 increased the risk of community transmission. The Omicron variant has also significantly increased the risk of infection. The World Health Organisation has reported that Omicron is spreading significantly faster than the Delta variant, with a doubling time of 2-3 days.

The Council has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to provide a work environment without risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable. This obligation includes eliminating or minimising the risks associated with exposure to COVID-19. The Council's risk assessment identified that requiring vaccination, alongside other controls, significantly reduces the risks for Council workers, elected members and members of the public accessing Council workplaces.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Council's position and requirements in relation to COVID-19 vaccinations.

This policy establishes the Council's approach to determining the roles which must be carried out by a worker who is vaccinated against COVID-19. It forms part of our organisational response to the COVID-19 pandemic and works in conjunction with other public health measures and the internal guidance in place to prevent and minimise the spread of COVID-19 in Council workplaces and the communities we work in and serve.

The policy reflects the Council's obligations, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, to take all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate, or otherwise minimise, any risks to the Council's workers, contractors and visitors.

3. Policy Statement

The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or otherwise minimise the risks from COVID-19 for our workers and other people who could be put at risk in our workplaces, for example customers, visitors or the general public.

We recognise that where there is a risk of COVID-19 infection for an individual, that risk then extends out to pose a risk to that person's colleagues, whanau, social networks and the community.

COVID-19 vaccines help protect people by reducing transmission and preventing or reducing symptoms of COVID-19. We strongly encourage our workers, including employees, volunteers, contractors, temporary staff and consultants to receive the vaccine as the primary way to protect themselves and the community from the spread of COVID-19.

4. Work that may only be conducted by a vaccinated person

When determining whether Council work must be carried out by a vaccinated person, the Council must ensure compliance with any legislative mandates, and undertake risk assessments if there is no legislative mandate.

The following Council roles must be carried out by a vaccinated person:

4.1. Roles that are mandated under the Vaccination Order

Under the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 (Vaccination Order), the Government has specified certain roles where vaccination is mandatory, unless a person is medically exempt. The Council must comply with the Vaccination Order. However, section 4.3 will apply to those staff who are medically exempt.

The Vaccination Order requires workers in these roles to be fully vaccinated by 17 January 2022. The roles are set out in [Schedule 2](#) of the Vaccination Order.

4.2. Roles impacted by an external party's requirement for Vaccine Passes

Where an external party requires a Vaccine Pass on entry to their premises, the Council must accommodate these requests to ensure we are able to carry out Council functions. Therefore, workers who are required to be physically onsite at an external party's premises must be vaccinated.

4.3. Roles identified by the Council as requiring the workers to be vaccination based on risk assessment

In consultation with staff, the Council has undertaken role assessments to identify the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for our workers and those they come into contact with. We have also sought expert advice regarding the risks and consequence of our workers becoming infected with COVID-19 at work and/or transmitting COVID-19 to others during work.

This information has been used to determine which roles must be carried out by a vaccinated person. It has also been used to establish where the risks and consequences of contracting and transmitting the COVID-19 virus are such that facilities, settings or other workplaces should only be entered by members of the public who are vaccinated, medically exempt or not eligible to be vaccinated.

Based on the risk assessment, the Council has determined that from 10 January 2022 all members of the public eligible to be vaccinated¹ entering a Christchurch City Council workplace will require the My Vaccine Pass and all roles carried out at Council workplaces must be carried out by workers who are vaccinated against COVID-19.

Role assessments will be regularly reviewed, particularly if levels of COVID-19 in the community change. We will monitor [public health advice](#), and take into account any updates on risks.

¹ At the time this policy was adopted, anyone aged 12 years and over is eligible to be vaccinated

5. Unvaccinated workers in a role where vaccination is required

The Council has decided that all roles are required to be carried out by a vaccinated worker.

Once the Council has received the vaccination status of workers, it will engage with any unvaccinated workers (and their union representative or support person, as required) in accordance with Council's policies.

The Council's steps may include:

- discussing in good faith the results of the risk assessment
- outlining the timeframe for when the work will only be able to be undertaken by vaccinated workers
- offering another opportunity for the employee to provide feedback on the assessment and timeframe to be vaccinated
- offering further support to be vaccinated
- outlining the consequences if they do not meet the deadline for a second dose of the vaccine
- exploring alternative options such as:
 - any reasonably practicable risk mitigations, other than vaccination, that reduce the risk to the health and safety of other people
 - changes to the employee's role (including hours and location at which work is performed)
 - redeployment to suitable alternative duties where vaccination is not required
 - notice of termination if no suitable alternatives are available.

5.1. Circumstances where unvaccinated workers may carry out work required to be undertaken by a vaccinated person

Unvaccinated workers may carry out work required to be carried out by a vaccinated person as specified in Part 4 of the Protection Framework Order, and clauses 9 and 9A of the Vaccination Order.

We will consult the worker on their specific options, including the appropriate safeguards, as the nature of the work may create additional risks to an unvaccinated person.

6. Vaccination status of workers

6.1. When the Council can ask a worker for their vaccination status

The Council can ask if a worker (or prospective worker) is vaccinated for COVID-19 if there is a legitimate, lawful need to know the vaccination status of that worker, for example, for a position that may only be conducted by a vaccinated person.

A worker will be required to provide evidence of vaccination (including additional booster shots) if that worker is in a role:

- where vaccination is mandated under the Vaccination Order

- identified by the Council based on a risk assessments
- where an external party requires vaccination.

6.2. Unwillingness to provide evidence of vaccination

If a worker chooses not to share their vaccination status with the Council, the Council will assume they are unvaccinated and the process outlined in section 5 in this policy will apply. The Council must tell the worker that it has made this assumption and the potential consequences of not providing the information before taking any action.

6.3. Privacy of Employee Personal Information Policy

The Council will maintain and appropriately secure records of evidence of vaccination in accordance with the Privacy of Employee Personal Information Policy.

An individual's health information, including whether they have been vaccinated for COVID-19, is their personal information. Generally, workers do not need to share their vaccination status (or any personal health information) with their employer. However, there is a public health exception in the Privacy Act 2020 that permits the collection, use and disclosure of personal information where it is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to public health or public safety.

7. New Employees

All new staff recruited will be required to meet the obligations of the policy. Council will be entitled to discontinue an application/recruitment process subject to an applicant's vaccination status.

8. Deviation from Policy

Deviation from this policy can only be made with the approval of the Policy Owner. Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may be considered a breach of your contract or employment agreement.

9. When the policy comes in to effect

This policy comes in to effect on 10 January 2022.

10. Definitions

Term	Definition
Council	means the Christchurch City Council
Medically exempt	Means a person who has a COVID-19 vaccination exemption granted by the Director-General of Health under clause 9B of the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021. Note that a medical exemption is only valid for up to six months.

Term	Definition
NZ Pass Verifier	is a tool provided by the Government that enables a Vaccine Pass to be verified as an authentic record of vaccination by scanning the QR code on the Vaccine Pass.
Person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)	Has the same meaning as in the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 .
Personal information	As defined by the Privacy Act 2020 means information about an identifiable individual. Note that the Privacy Commissioner has determined that a person's vaccination status is personal information.
Risk Assessment	An assessment of the risks of exposure, transmission and infection, and the potential consequences. It also considered the efficacy of available controls. The risk assessment was based on the role assessments, expert advice and relevant research.
Role Assessment	An assessment of a role to identify the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for workers and those they come in to contact with, role assessments are undertaken in consultation with managers and staff.
Vaccinated / Fully vaccinated	Means a person who has received all of the doses of a COVID-19 vaccine or combination of COVID-19 vaccines specified in the first column of the table in Schedule 3 of the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021, administered in accordance with the requirements specified for that vaccine or combination of vaccines in the second column of that table, or as varied.
Vaccine Pass	Means a COVID-19 vaccination certificate (My Vaccine Pass) issued under the COVID-19 Public Health Response (COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate) Order 2021.
Worker	Has the same meaning as defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, being any individual who carries out work in any capacity for a PCBU, including work as- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an employee; or • a contractor or subcontractor; or • an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the business or undertaking; or • an outworker (including a home worker); or • an apprentice or a trainee; or • a person gaining work experience or undertaking a work trial; or • a volunteer worker; or • a person of a prescribed class.

11. References and related documents

Document	Link
COVID-19 Public Health Response Act 2020	https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0012

Document	Link
COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021	https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2021/0094
COVID-19 Public Health Response (COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate) Order 2021	https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2021/0382
COVID-19 Public Health Response (Protection Framework) Order 2021	www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2021/0386
Health and Safety at Work Act 2015	https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2015/0070
Privacy Act 2020	https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0031
New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990	https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1990/0109
Unite against COVID-19	https://covid19.govt.nz/
WorkSafeNZ - How to decide what work requires a vaccinated employee	https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid/how-to-decide-what-work-requires-a-vaccinated-employee/
Employment New Zealand – Vaccines and the Workplace	https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/covid-19-vaccination-and-employment/
Privacy of Employee Personal Information Policy	http://intranet.ccc.govt.nz/organisation/policies-strategies-and-bylaws/internal-policies