

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Overview

At South Wairarapa District Council, we have a responsibility to safeguard the community we serve, especially those who are most at risk from COVID-19, while also keeping our team, whanau and friends, and other external parties safe. The Council recognises that vaccination is the most effective strategy to keep the community safe by either preventing or reducing symptoms of COVID-19 in the person who has received the vaccine.

Further, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA), we have a legal obligation to take all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or, where that is not possible, minimise hazards and keep our places safe. This includes minimising the risk of infection from viruses such as COVID-19, which could have significant, life-threatening, and long-term consequences if contracted by a team member. All our team play a vital role in creating a protective barrier around our vulnerable residents.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out SWDC's approach to COVID-19 vaccinations for staff and the implications in our workplaces. This is based on:

- Our requirements under the Public Health Orders
- Our obligation to provide a safe work environment without risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- As Council, we also have an obligation to the city we serve and should be encouraging vaccination to reduce the potential risk to the community for exposure to infection.

Scope

This COVID-19 Vaccination Policy applies to SWDC employees who are either covered by the requirements of a Public Health Order or whose roles are deemed to require vaccination as a result of the risk assessment process, for health and safety purposes, or because they are working in a site using a COVID-19 Vaccination Pass (CVP). All employees covered by this Policy are required to comply with the policy in its entirety.

SWDC volunteers are classed as workers under the HSWA, therefore they need to meet the requirements of this policy if they are covered by it, as an example carry out voluntary work that meets the requirements of the Public Health Order.

Individuals who fall in to one or more of the groups as detailed under Appendix A, that fall under a health order will be contacted to provide assurance they meet the vaccine requirements of either a Public Health Order or SWDC requirements.

Policy Statement

SWDC strongly encourages all employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccination as this is the main form of defence against COVID-19.

Whilst this is SWDC's adopted approach, should a role be deemed as being high risk (and therefore normally require vaccination), Council, can, should it choose, explore options that may include remote working if the role allows it, to manage the risk of transmission.

Employees covered by this policy are required to be fully vaccinated (two doses) with an approved Ministry of Health (MoH) COVID-19 Vaccine and provide the Council with evidence of continued vaccination. The timeframes have been set in accordance with either Public Health Order requirements, the Protection Framework (Traffic Light System) or with business requirements following a risk assessment process.

We know that additional periodic vaccinations may be required for COVID-19. In this case, employees covered by this policy will be required to continue to receive periodic booster vaccinations as required, based on the MoH public health advice, to remain fully vaccinated in accordance with this Policy. Employees who are not fully vaccinated in accordance with this Policy will be required to undergo vaccination at the earliest available opportunity, but no later than a specified date that will be communicated to them at the appropriate time.

The evidence of vaccination must be provided by following the process set out below unless the Council approves another process for individual employees. The Council may request that an employee provides further evidence if it is not satisfied with the evidence of vaccination they have provided.

Support Provided

The Council provides a range of support to assist employees in becoming vaccinated. Support will include:

- Continue to actively discuss with employees the benefits of vaccination and explain the health and safety risks of not being vaccinated, provide information about COVID-19 and vaccinations available
- Actively support staff to access vaccinations via government community agencies
- Flexibility and/or reasonable paid time off work to receive the vaccination
- Paid discretionary leave for time off in the unlikely event that staff are unwell briefly after being vaccinated.
- EAP is available for staff to navigate through uncertainty

Workplaces

SWDC will require proof of vaccination, via the COVID Vaccination Pass (CVP) from staff, customers, the community, contractors, or visitors as a condition of entry to those sites identified as requiring vaccination passport entry under its control. Those individual sites, and staff within these sites, not covered initially may still be reviewed in the future as requiring CVP and will be notified and consulted with if changes are made to require vaccination passports as a condition of entry.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments have been undertaken for roles within the Council, not covered by the Public Health Order, to determine if mandatory vaccination is an appropriate health and safety mitigation. The risk assessment process has been led by the Human Resources and Health, Safety and Emergency Management functions and includes engagement with health and safety representatives, the PSA and management. This document has been provided to all staff impacted by this risk assessment.

Medical Exemptions

Where an employee is not able to be vaccinated with an approved COVID-19 vaccine due to a medical condition they should contact their Manager in advance of required vaccination dates to inform them of the situation. In line with the MoH advice, exemptions will be limited to situations where a suitable alternative to the COVID-19 vaccine is not readily available of an individual and will also be granted for a specified period of time, reflecting, for example, recovery from clinical conditions or the availability of alternate vaccines.

Under the amended Vaccinations Order 7 November 21, all medical exemptions as of 7 November 21 will expire and applications will need to be made via a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner for new medical exemptions. Applications need to be made to the MoH to approve the medical exemption or not. Staff will need to follow the Ministry of Health guidance for medical exemptions.

Proof of the medical exemption from the MoH will be required. The Council will then look at reasonable redeployment opportunities into roles that do not require employee to be fully vaccinated, and/or if reasonable adjustments to roles could be made to accommodate the employee without requiring them to be fully vaccinated in accordance with this Policy.

During the time that employees do not meet the vaccination obligations of this policy and while we are working with them to look at alternative options, we may require the employee to remain away from work or work from a different location or undertake alternative duties. If the employee is required to remain away from work, we will apply leave without pay, although the employee can opt to use their annual leave.

As the last potential outcome, the Council will consider termination of employment. Prior to termination, employees will be provided four (4) weeks of paid notice where you would either not be required to work or you may be redeployed to an alternative role during this time.

Record Keeping and Privacy

Employees will be required to provide evidence of vaccination by the dates covered in the "employee responsibilities" section of this Policy. The Council will maintain and appropriately secure records of evidence of vaccination in accordance with the Privacy Policy. Where an employee provides a medical exemption due to an inability to be vaccinated, that information will be treated as a confidential personal health record and will be stored securely.

Failure of Employees to Meet Obligations

Failure of employees to meet the obligations outlined in this policy includes, but is not limited to:

- An employee refusing to advise the Council of their vaccination status
- An employee refusing to be fully vaccinated as required by this Policy, either before they begin work, or as required during their employment.

In the event of an employee's failure to meet the obligations of this Policy, their manager will first engage with them about this and seek to understand their barriers to vaccination such as health related concerns, concerns about the vaccination, or why they are refusing to provide the required information. Any practical solutions that could be put in place will be considered as a way to remove barriers to vaccination or providing information.

If employees still refuse to comply with this policy, the Council will then look at reasonable redeployment opportunities into roles that do not require the employee to be fully vaccinated,

and/or if reasonable adjustments to roles could be made to accommodate the employee without requiring them to be fully vaccinated in accordance with this Policy and without increasing health and safety risks or causing unreasonable disruption to the Council's activities.

During the period that employees do not meet the vaccination or information obligations of this policy and while we are working with them to look at alternative options, we may require the employee to remain away from work or work from a different location or undertake alternative duties. If the employee is required to remain away from work, we will apply leave without pay, although employee can opt to use their annual leave.

As the last potential outcome of failing to meet either the vaccination or information obligations of this Policy, the Council will consider termination of employment. Prior to termination employees will be provided four (4) weeks of paid notice where you would either not be required to work or you may be redeployed to an alternative role during this time. At any point during this four (4) week notice period, an employee can provide evidence to support their compliance with this policy. If an employee does meet the obligations of this Policy during that time, the termination process will cease, and the employee will return to work.

New Employees

All new employees recruited into roles covered by this Policy will be required to meet the obligations of the Policy and provide proof of their vaccination status before they commence work with the Council. This applies to roles identified as being of high or higher risk.

Offers of employment will be conditional on full compliance with this Policy and include the requirement to continue to receive periodic booster vaccinations as required, based on public health advice, and to remain fully vaccinated in accordance with this Policy.

Third Party Requirements

The Council recognises that there may be circumstances where third parties, such as shared service providers, clients, other Councils, suppliers, may require entry to a location or workplace. This may require them to enter premises or sites under our control or certain facilities particularly those where vulnerable people may be present or reside. The requirements of SWDC on those individuals and organisations are as follows:

Applicable Groups	Definition	Risk factors	Mitigation	Implications
Shared services	Workers from other Councils who do work for SWDC and access our offices	SWDC has less knowledge of or control over their risk profile than of SWDC staff. The risk is increased due to the multiple businesses & locations that they work at. SWDC has some control over their performance.	<p>All shared services staff can only access SWDC Council premises if we have first received an assurance from their employer (MDC or CDC) that only staff who are vaccinated can access our premises.</p> <p>Those who do access the buildings, must still wear face masks and socially distance as a second line of defence in the absence of sitting a Covid vaccine pass</p> <p>If they openly share their CVP, no face masks are required.</p>	Communications required by person instructing employers of shared services staff of this new policy.
Contractors	Workers delivering on Council projects or Council infrastructure	SWDC has limited knowledge of or control over their risk profile. The risk is increased due to the multiple businesses & locations that they work at. SWDC has little control over their performance.	<p>All contractors can only access SWDC Council premises if we have first received an assurance from their employer or their company, that only staff who are vaccinated can access our premises.</p> <p>Those who do access the buildings, must still wear face masks and socially distance as a second line of defence in the</p>	Communications required by person instructing contractors of this new policy.

			<p>absence of siting a Covid vaccine pass</p> <p>If they openly share their CVP, no face masks are required.</p>	
Consultants	People working with SWDC staff on issues relating to Council operations	SWDC has very limited knowledge of or control over their risk profile. The risk is increased due to the multiple businesses & locations that they work at. SWDC has very little control over their performance.	<p>All consultants can only access SWDC Council premises if we have first received an assurance from their employer that only staff who are vaccinated can access our premises.</p> <p>Those who do access the buildings, must still wear face masks and socially distance as a second line of defence in the absence of siting a Covid vaccine pass</p> <p>If they openly share their CVP, no face masks are required.</p>	Communications required by person instructing consultants of this new policy.
Visitors (non-public)	People from other agencies visiting SWDC on business matters	SWDC has almost no knowledge of or control over their risk profile. The risk is increased due to the multiple businesses & locations that they work at. SWDC has very little control over their performance.	<p>All non-public visitors can only access SWDC Council premises if we have first received an assurance from their employer that only staff who are vaccinated can access our premises.</p>	Communications required by person instructing visitors of this new policy.

			<p>Those who do access the buildings, must still wear face masks and socially distance as a second line of defence in the absence of siting a Covid vaccine pass</p> <p>If they openly share their CVP, no face masks are required.</p>	
Elected Members	Mayor, Councillors, Community Boards, Māori Standing Committee	SWDC has some knowledge their risk profile, with little control over it. They are representatives of the public. SWDC has little influence over their performance.	<p>Elected members who do not wish to share their vaccination status and who access the SWDC buildings, must still wear face masks and socially distance as a line of defence in the absence of siting a Covid vaccine pass.</p> <p>If they openly share their CVP, no face masks are required.</p>	Communication between the CEO and the Mayor as to the expectations on elected members.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff member are responsible for:

Employees covered by this policy are responsible for:

- Being fully vaccinated with an approved COVID-19 vaccine and providing evidence of vaccination on or before the required date.
- Continue to receive periodic vaccinations as required, based on public health advice, to remain fully vaccinated in accordance with this Policy.
- Notifying their Manager if they wish to seek a medical exemption from complying with the Policy.
- Notifying their Manager if they are otherwise unwilling or unable to comply with the Policy.

Managers and Human Resources collectively are responsible for:

- Ensuring employees covered by this policy are aware of the requirement to be fully vaccinated with an approved COVID-19 vaccine and provide evidence of vaccination under the Policy.
- Ensuring job advertisements and recruitment processes for roles covered by this policy set out the requirement to be fully vaccinated with an approved COVID-19 vaccine and provide evidence of vaccination under the Policy.
- Managing requests for leave associated with COVID-19 vaccination and consulting internally in any of the following instances:
 - an employee notifies them that they have a medical condition that prevents them having the vaccine and wish to seek a medical exemption from complying with the Policy, an employee notifies them that they wish to seek an exemption from complying with the Policy on other grounds and/or an employee refuses to fully vaccinate with an approved COVID-19 Vaccine and/or provide evidence of vaccination under the Policy
 - The handling of any information associated with people's health or wellbeing sensitively and in accordance with the Privacy Policy.

Related Policies:

The following policies are related to this approach and include, but are not limited to;

- SWDC Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Appendix A: Risk level for the various roles across Council.

SWDC role based risk assessments for vaccination		<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: red; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> Higher <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: orange; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> High <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: yellow; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> Moderate <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: lightgreen; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> Low </div>	How many people does the employee carrying out the work come into contact with?	How easy will it be to identify the people who the employee comes into contact with?	How close is the employee carrying out the tasks in proximity to other people?	How long does the work require the employee to be in that proximity to other people?	Does the work involve regular interaction with people considered at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, such as people with underlying health conditions?	What is the risk of COVID-19 infection and transmission in the work environment when compared to the risk outside work?	Will the work continue to involve regular interaction with unknown people if the region is at a higher alert level?	Risk score total	Business Continuity	Public Health Order Vaccine Mandate (education or medical provider)	Vaccination potentially required: Consultation needed
Partnerships & Operations	GM Group	GM P&O	4	3	3	4	3	3	1	21	High	No	Yes
		Community Dev Co	4	3	4	3	2	3	1	20	Med	Yes	Yes
	Amenities	Assets & GIS Officer	3	1	3	3	1	3	1	15	Med	No	No
		Amenities Mgr & Solid waste	4	3	3	4	3	3	1	21	High	No	Yes
		Property Adv	4	3	3	4	3	3	1	21	Med	No	No
		Amenities Co	4	3	3	4	4	4	2	24	High	No	Yes
		Property Portfolio Adv	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	19	Med	No	No
	Roading	Cleaner	2	3	3	3	3	4	2	20	Med	No	No
		Roading Mgr	3	2	3	4	3	4	2	21	High	No	Yes
	Library	Roading Eng	3	2	3	4	3	4	2	21	High	No	Yes
		Library Mgr	5	3	4	4	3	4	1	24	Med	No	Yes
		Branch Librarian	5	4	4	5	5	4	1	28	Med	Yes	Yes
		Library Assistant	5	4	4	5	5	4	1	28	Med	Yes	Yes
	Planning & Environment	GM Building	NZLP Group	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	25	High	Yes
GM P&E			4	3	3	4	3	3	1	21	High	No	Yes
Building		Building Manager	2	2	3	3	3	3	1	17	High	No	Yes
		BCO	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	24	High	Yes	Yes
		Building Admin & Scanner	2	1	3	2	3	3	1	15	Med	No	No
Planning		Planning Manager	3	2	2	4	3	4	1	19	Med	Yes	Yes
		Planner, int planner, contract planner	3	2	2	4	3	4	1	19	Med	Yes	Yes
		Planning Admin	2	2	3	3	3	3	1	17	Med	No	No
Environments		Planning cert officer	3	2	3	4	3	3	1	19	High	No	Yes
		ES Manager	4	2	3	3	3	4	3	22	High	No	Yes
		EHO	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	26	High	Yes	Yes
		Alcohol Inspector	4	4	3	4	3	4	1	23	Med	No	Yes
		Bylaws/ Dog control	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	25	Med	Yes	Yes
		ES Admin	4	2	3	3	3	4	1	20	Med	No	No
Finance	GM Finance	CFO	3	1	3	4	3	4	1	19	High	No	Yes
		Finance Manager	3	1	3	4	3	4	1	19	Med	No	No
	Finance	Accounts receivable officer	4	3	1	1	3	4	1	17	Med	No	No
		Accounts payable/accounts	2	1	3	1	3	3	1	14	High	No	Yes
		Rates officer	2	1	3	4	4	4	1	19	Med	No	No
		GM C&E	4	3	3	4	3	4	1	22	High	No	Yes
Comm & Engagement	Comms	Communications Adv	3	3	3	4	3	3	1	20	Med	No	No
		Venues Coordinator	4	2	3	3	3	3	1	19	Med	No	No
		GM HR & CS	4	1	3	4	3	3	1	19	High	No	Yes
HR & Corp Services	H&S	H&S Advisor	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	17	Med	No	No
		Systems Admin	4	1	4	3	3	3	1	19	High	No	Yes
	CSS	Customer Services	5	3	3	4	3	4	1	23	Med	No	Yes
Office of CE	CEO	CEO	4	3	3	4	3	3	1	21	High	No	Yes
		EA	3	2	3	2	3	3	1	17	Low	No	No
Policy & Governance	GM P&G	GM P&G	4	3	3	4	3	3	1	21	High	No	Yes
		P&G Advisor	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	18	Med	No	No
		Committee Advisor	4	3	3	4	3	3	1	21	High	No	Yes
		Information Advisor	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	18	Med	No	No

Appendix B: Vaccination Process

SWDC Vaccination Process for Employees (post-policy consultation)

This process diagram outlines the how mandatory vaccinations will be applied at SWDC.



**SOUTH WAIRARAPA
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Kia Reretahi Tātau



