

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to continue to protect the health and safety of all employees, donors, and volunteers from the spread of COVID-19.

Policy Statement

To protect the health and safety of its employees, all Canadian Blood Services' employees shall be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, subject to any medical or other human rights grounds (e.g. religious reasons). As well, all volunteers and contractors visiting any Canadian Blood Services sites, including mobile clinics, shall be required to be fully vaccinated.

It is important to note that public health guidance on measures for fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals may continue to evolve, which could affect this policy and the specific steps outlined below. Any changes to the policy will be clearly communicated.

Employees

As Canadian Blood Services works towards a fully vaccinated workplace, the following steps shall take place:

1. On or about **September 13, 2021**, employees, including fee-for-service contractors, shall be required to disclose their vaccination status.
2. Any employee indicating that they are not fully vaccinated shall be subject to an interim period of rapid antigen screening until the end of the month of October. During this period of rapid screening, unvaccinated employees shall continue to report to work, so long as they have a negative rapid antigen screening result within the last 72 hours.
3. Any employee not subject to a medical or other human rights exemption will undergo an educational session regarding the efficacy of vaccinations in the workplace.
4. After October 31, 2021 (final vaccination date), all employees shall be required to be fully vaccinated. This date may be modified depending upon the implementation of the policy (steps #1 and #2). To be clear: the final vaccination date will be directly communicated to all employees who are not able to demonstrate full vaccination status.

Allowances may be made by Canadian Blood Services, to extend the final vaccination date, for any employees who are partially vaccinated and able to demonstrate they are currently in the process of becoming fully vaccinated.

5. Any employees after the final vaccination date (and who have not been provided with an extension as noted in #4), who have failed to demonstrate that they are fully vaccinated shall be placed on an unpaid leave of absence for ten (10) days.
During this unpaid leave of absence, Canadian Blood Services will, to the best of its ability, seek to address any questions the employee may have regarding the vaccine, and particularly the employment consequences for failing to be a fully vaccinated employee.
6. Following the ten (10) days of unpaid leave of absence, any employees still not able to demonstrate a fully vaccinated status shall be terminated from employment with Canadian Blood Services.

**Steps 4-6 shall not apply to any employee accommodated as per legitimate medical or other human rights grounds. In all cases requiring workplace accommodation, Canadian Blood Services will accommodate, in accordance with the relevant human rights legislation and the Human Rights in the Workplace - Discrimination Policy, to the point of undue hardship.*

Employees on pre-existing long-term leave at the time of the effective date of this policy shall not be subject to the employee implementation plan. These employees shall work with their leaders to determine a specific compliance timeline related to their return to work date.

Volunteers

1. Following October 1, 2021, only fully vaccinated volunteers shall be permitted to enter Canadian Blood Services sites, including access to any mobile events in their capacity as a volunteer. Volunteers will be required to show proof of vaccination before they volunteer.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of Canadian Blood Services. This policy does not apply to donors.

Roles and responsibilities

- Employees and volunteers are responsible for complying with this policy.
- Employee Health Services, in consultation with leaders and legal as required, is responsible for determining appropriate accommodation to the point of undue hardship for employees requesting an exemption for legitimate medical reasons.
- Leaders are responsible for ensuring employee compliance with this policy, which includes ensuring that employees have the opportunity to complete the disclosure requirements. Leaders must also ensure that all direct reports are aware of this policy and addressing any questions employees may have regarding the implementation of the policy.
- People, Culture and Performance, in consultation with leaders and legal as required, is responsible for determining appropriate accommodation to the point of undue hardship for employees requesting an exemption for legitimate human rights reasons other than medical.
- Supply chain and donor relations leadership is responsible for ensuring that all volunteers are aware of this policy and addressing any questions volunteers may have regarding the implementation of the policy.

Compliance

Employees failing to comply with this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. For greater clarity, providing untruthful information regarding screening or vaccine status, at any point during this process, shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Definitions

Contractors – For the purposes of this policy, contractors shall mean all parties engaged in a fee-for-service relationship with Canadian Blood Services.

Education Session – The education session will use existing resources available from the Public Health Agency of Canada, governments and others, and will cover topics including, but not limited to:

- i. how COVID-19 vaccines work;
- ii. vaccine safety related to the development of the COVID-19 vaccines;
- iii. the benefits of vaccination against COVID-19;
- iv. risks of not being vaccinated against COVID-19; and

- v. possible side effects of COVID-19 vaccination.

Final Vaccination Date – This refers to the date whereby Canadian Blood Services requires all employees to be fully vaccinated.

Medical Exemption – These are circumstances where Canadian Blood Services is satisfied that a legitimate medical condition exists, which prevents an employee from getting fully vaccinated. Canadian Blood Services will require written proof of a medical reason, provided by a physician or registered nurse in the extended class, that sets out: (i) a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated; and (ii) the effective time-period for the medical reason.

In determining whether the medical condition is legitimate, employees will provide medical documentation to and work with the Employee Health Services group at Canadian Blood Services to determine whether a medical accommodation is necessary and possible. Canadian Blood Services reserves the right to have the medical information reviewed by applicable medical specialists.

Rapid Antigen Screening – Rapid antigen screens can quickly detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic people and help to identify and reduce risk of further infections. Rapid screening is only appropriate for asymptomatic individuals. If an employee has symptoms, or any other risk factors that indicate they require testing for COVID-19, they must seek lab-based PCR diagnostic testing (administered through public health or an alternative entity, should public health testing be unavailable, as directed by Canadian Blood Services). Rapid screening is either conducted on-site or at-home (dependent on the jurisdiction). Employees receive training on how to do rapid screening, including conducting their own nasal swab, preparing the sample for testing and interpreting test results (for at-home screening). Employees use a Rapid Screening App to book appointments for on-site screening and to upload test results if the screening is conducted at home.

Any unvaccinated employees screening positive during the interim rapid screening period will be contacted by the Canadian Blood Services case management team and their manager will also be notified. Anyone with a positive result must leave work immediately (or not come into work if the screening was done at home) and get a PCR test (administered through public health or an alternative entity, should public health testing be unavailable, as directed by Canadian Blood Services) within 24 hours. While the employee is off work to seek PCR testing, and waiting for their PCR test result, they are eligible for COVID-19 quarantine leave.

If the PCR test is positive, the employee must notify their manager and follow all instructions provided by public health. During this time, the employee is eligible for paid COVID-19-related sick leave until cleared to return to work by public health. Once cleared to return the employee must contact OHS/EHS.

If the PCR result is negative the employee may enter the worksite and continue to participate in rapid screening.

Religious Reasons / Exemption – These are circumstances where employees indicate that due to a religious belief, employees are unable to be fully vaccinated. Should these requests for exemption be provided by employees, Canadian Blood Services reserves the right to make appropriate enquiries to verify the authenticity of a religious-based request by an employee.

Vaccine/Vaccination – This refers to any COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada. Furthermore, “fully vaccinated” refers to the complete vaccine dosage as approved by Health Canada and having received the final dose of the vaccine at least 14 days ago. For the purposes of this policy, any employee not “fully vaccinated” will be deemed “unvaccinated”.

Volunteers – An individual who contributes time and service to assist in fulfilling the mission of Canadian Blood Services and is officially accepted and enrolled by the organization to perform a task. Volunteers perform tasks at the direction of and on behalf of Canadian Blood Services without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reasonable pre-approved reimbursement for expenses incurred. Unless specifically stated, volunteers shall not be considered as “employees” of Canadian Blood Services.

Review

Given the nature of the pandemic, this policy will be reviewed as needed.