

Department of Executive & Indigenous Affairs COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines

October 28, 2021

PURPOSE

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines have been developed to provide direction and information to supervisors and employees about the implementation of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (Policy), as amended by the Financial Management Board (FMB). These Guidelines are also intended to provide employees with the information necessary to arrange for vaccination, if necessary, and to obtain proof of vaccination documentation ahead of the November 30, 2021 implementation date.

Amendments to the Policy have been made to ensure that the GNWT follows evolving best practice standards in management of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to protect employees and members of the public.

POLICY BASE

These Guidelines are consistent with and support the implementation of the Amended GNWT COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and the Amended Corporate COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Guidelines.

SCOPE

The Policy concerns vaccination against COVID-19, or Coronavirus disease, an infectious respiratory illness caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), and the implementation of other workplace safety precautions in lieu of vaccination.

This Policy and the present Guidelines apply to all employees of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs and all individuals engaged to provide services on behalf of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms apply in these Guidelines:

COVID-19 – or Coronavirus disease is an infectious respiratory illness caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Deputy Head – the Deputy Minister of a department, the Chief Executive Officer of a public committee, board or council, or such a person as may be appointed or designated as Deputy Head.

Employees – means all members of the public service as defined by the *Public Service Act*.

Contractors – means all individuals engaged to provide services with or without remuneration on behalf of the GNWT.

Fully Vaccinated – for the purposes of this Policy, a person is considered Fully Vaccinated 14 days after receiving the final dose of a Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine or an approved combination of Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccines.

GUIDELINES

General

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs is committed to ensuring a safe working environment for our employees and the members of the public we serve.

All Employees and Contractors will be required to have received the full series of Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine or an approved combination of Health Canada approved vaccines at least 14 full days prior to November 30, 2021.

Submitting Proof of Vaccination

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees must provide documentation setting out their proof of vaccination on or before November 30, 2021.

Acceptable Proof of Vaccination

Acceptable proof of vaccination documentation must be an official record from the public health office in the jurisdiction(s) where the employee received the vaccine dose(s) and must include the following information:

- i. The issuing authority of the vaccination record;
- ii. The Employee's full name;
- iii. The name/brand of the vaccine(s) received; and
- iv. The date(s) of vaccination.

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees may submit their proof of vaccination using the Human Resources Information System (HRIS). For more information about how to submit proof of vaccination documents using HRIS, visit the [MyHR website](#).

The Human Resources Branch of the Department of Finance is responsible for securing personal information submitted by Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees in accordance with the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (ATIPPA) and for verification of Employee vaccination information.

Upon submission of the Employee's proof of vaccination documents, the information will be verified, and the Employee's direct supervisor notified that the Employee has submitted proof of vaccination.

The information verified will be:

- i. The issuing authority of the vaccination record;
- ii. The Employee's full name;
- iii. The name/brand of the vaccine(s) received; and
- iv. The date(s) of vaccination.

All proof of vaccination documents will be securely stored in the HRIS system.

The Employee's direct supervisor may maintain a record confirming the vaccination status of their direct reports. This record will be for the purposes of monitoring and enforcing workplace safety precautions.

Use of and Access to Employee Information

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employee vaccination status information may only be accessed in circumstances deemed necessary by the GNWT and for the purposes set out in the Policy.

In the event of any unauthorized access to an Employee's vaccination status information, the Employee will be immediately advised of the breach and circumstances relating to that breach.

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees may access their vaccination status information through HRIS.

Other Measures to protect the safety of employees and members of the public

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees who do not provide proof of full vaccination by November 30, 2021, will be required to wear Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs designated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all times in the workplace and to undergo regular testing for COVID-19 as directed by the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs until they provide proof of vaccination.

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees who refuse to wear PPE or participate in testing protocols directed by the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs will be required to take a leave without pay until they do so.

Personal Protective Equipment

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination will be required to wear a Department Executive and Indigenous Affairs authorized face mask while completing their duties. These employees may also be required to wear other PPE, such as eye protection and gloves, depending on the employees' duties, level of contact with colleagues and members of the public, and other hazard control measures in place at the worksite.

Providing proof of vaccination does not release Employees from use of PPE or adherence to COVID-19 testing required in their workplace as either a function of their duties or as part of Public Health Orders that may be in effect.

COVID-19 Testing

Regular testing for COVID-19 will be required within 72 hours of attendance at a GNWT worksite for all Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees who do not provide proof of vaccination. Those Employees will be required to provide proof of a negative test result produced within the preceding 72 hours before resuming work or attending at a GNWT worksite, or as otherwise directed by their supervisor.

COVID-19 testing of Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination will be conducted as directed.

- Upon confirmation of a negative COVID-19 Test result, the Employee will be allowed to report to work wearing the required PPE.
- In the event of a positive COVID-19 test, the Employee will immediately begin self-isolating. The Employee will be required to follow all Office of the Chief Public Health Officer requirements in effect at the time of the positive test and may only return to work once cleared to do so by Public Health.

The schedule of Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employee testing will be set with regard to the work schedule of Employees to ensure that there is an appropriate nexus of time between a negative test result and the Employee performing their duties.

For example:

- If an Employee is providing test results three times per week, testing may be spread out throughout the week depending on the employee's schedule.

Duty Travel by Air

The Government of Canada has announced plans to institute COVID-19 vaccination requirements for all travelers departing by air from Canadian airports. Duty travel by air will require Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees to be fully vaccinated and to have submitted proof of vaccination. Use of PPE and testing for COVID-19 in lieu of vaccination will not be permitted.

Duty Travel by Ground

For the duration of all Duty Travel, Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination shall wear Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs designated PPE, except at times when they are alone in their travel accommodations or dining.

All Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees will be assigned their own accommodations while on Duty Travel.

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination are required to wear PPE throughout travel to and from Duty Travel destinations.

Accommodations

Accommodations will be made for Employees who are both unable to be vaccinated and unable to wear mandatory PPE or undergo regular testing for verified medical reasons or based on protected grounds under the *Human Rights Act*.

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees seeking accommodation are subject to the *Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy* and the *Duty to Accommodate Policy Application Guidelines*.

Requests for accommodation due to a medical or human rights exemption to COVID-19 vaccination must be made to Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs before November 30, 2021, or as soon as is practicable.

Documentation Required for Medical Exemptions

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and Tlicho Community Services Agency released an Approach to Requests for Exemption from COVID-19 guideline, which provides guidance to support NWT healthcare providers in a consistent and evidence-based approach to vaccine exemption requests.

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees requesting an accommodation due to a medical exemption to vaccination will be required to provide a letter from a physician or

nurse practitioner or other certified proof of medical exemption from a physician or nurse practitioner in order to claim medical exemption status.

EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the Employee

- All Employees of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs are expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to the worksite.
- Any Employee of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, regardless of vaccination status, who develops symptoms of COVID-19 should refrain from attending at their workplace and should promptly advise their direct supervisor.
- All Employees of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs are expected to follow all Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) and Public Health orders.
- All Employees of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs are responsible for obtaining copies of their vaccination records.
- All Employees of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs must provide proof of full vaccination on or before November 30, 2021.
- Employees of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs who will not provide proof of vaccination by November 30, 2021, should inform their direct supervisor at the earliest possible date so that arrangements can be made for provision of PPE and institution of a testing schedule, or so that other accommodations can be made, where applicable.
- Employees of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs are responsible for complying with all PPE and testing protocols as directed.

Responsibilities of the Employer

- The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs is responsible for informing all incumbents of positions within the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs in writing of the vaccination requirements they must adhere to.
- The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs is responsible for ensuring that all required PPE is provided to Employees required to wear PPE while performing their duties.

- The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs will provide information about COVID-19 vaccination to all Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees and ensure that unvaccinated employees who wish to receive COVID-19 vaccination are granted the opportunity to do so. Materials and information about COVID-19 vaccination can be found on the [GNWT's Response to COVID-19](#) website.
- Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs hiring managers will include details about the GNWT COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Guidelines in all job postings.
- The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs will ensure that all Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs workplaces follow GNWT Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) standards for COVID-19 safety within the workplace.

LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER RELATED AUTHORITY

The *Public Service Act* and Regulations, and all relevant policies, and the terms and conditions of employment continue to apply.

All Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees will agree to abide by all government and department policies, collective agreements, procedures and legislation, including but not limited to the confidentiality of clients, department information and documentation.

APPENDIX A - Policy Roll-Out: Ensuring Maximum Vaccination

Education and Training for Unvaccinated Employees

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs encourages all employees who are able to become vaccinated. Vaccine hesitancy can be the result of individuals being unaware of the benefits of vaccination, both for the Employee and societally, and of the safety of vaccination.

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees who are not yet vaccinated are encouraged to review vaccine information and strongly consider the benefits of vaccination. These materials are available at the [GNWT's Response to COVID-19 webpage](#).

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs Employees are able to attend vaccination appointments during their scheduled working hours.

Health and Safety Considerations

Accommodations Procedures and Departmental Preparedness

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs is prepared to review and if necessary provide accommodations for Employees who are unable to be vaccinated or undergo regular testing, either for medical reasons or based on protected grounds under the *Human Rights Act*.