

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
VACCINATION REQUIREMENT**

1. Who does DNR's vaccination requirement apply to?

All DNR employees are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 18, 2021 as a condition of employment. The requirement also applies to volunteers, interns, and on-site contractors. On-site contractors means contractors that enter DNR facilities.

2. When do employees need to be fully vaccinated?

All DNR employees are required to be fully vaccinated by October 18, 2021. Wildland firefighters and members of incident management teams who are deployed to fires and, due to fire activity, unable to be fully vaccinated by October 18, 2021 will be granted a two-week extension to November 1, 2021.

3. Does the vaccination requirement apply to new hires?

Yes. New hires need to meet the requirement by October 18, 2021.

4. When are individuals considered fully vaccinated?

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series of Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after the single-dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

5. How do employees request an extension to November 1, 2021, due to fire activity?

Employees can submit a request for this extension through Human Resources at [DNR RE Protected Leave](#).

6. *UPDATED* What if an employee is partially vaccinated as of October 18, 2021?

If the employee provides proof of receiving their first dose in a two-dose series (or the single dose for a single-dose vaccine) by 10/18/2021, they will have up to forty-five (45) calendar days from the date of their first dose to become fully vaccinated.

Effective October 25, 2021: If the agency determines a partially vaccinated employee's work can be performed remotely and business needs can be met while the employee becomes fully vaccinated, the employee will be assigned to telework. Employees may also use applicable leave during the forty-five (45) calendar days. Please use MyPortal to submit leave during this period.

If the employee does not provide proof of being fully vaccinated within the forty-five (45) calendar days, they will be separated.

7. Where can employees find more information about the vaccines?

More information about the vaccines can be found here:
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/Vaccine>

8. How does DNR verify vaccination status?

DNR continues to use its current visual verification process; attestation is not accepted as a substitute for proof of vaccination.

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
VACCINATION REQUIREMENT**

9. What types of vaccination verification are accepted?

Proof of vaccination verification must be a CDC vaccination card (or a printed or electronically stored photo of the card), OR documentation of vaccination from a health care provider or state immunization information system record.

10. Who do employees show proof of vaccination to?

Proof of vaccination can be shown to the employee's Appointing Authority or Human Resources.

11. If an employee has previously been infected with COVID-19, and can show they have the antibodies against the virus, are they exempt from the vaccine requirement?

No, there is no exception for those with COVID-19 anti-bodies; however, employees in this situation may qualify for a medical accommodation if it is not safe yet for them to receive the vaccine. If an individual is advised by their medical provider they should not get the vaccine within a particular timeframe, they may request an accommodation through Human Resources at [DNR RE Protected Leave](#). However, they would need to become fully vaccinated as soon as the waiting period ends.

12. What if an employee has misplaced or lost their COVID-19 vaccination card?

Per the Department of Health (DOH) individuals can access proof of vaccination in Washington State through the MyIR website or the [MyIRMobile](#) app. *Note: Verification of records through MyIR may not be immediate, and access is currently limited to English language only. For language assistance, or additional help getting records, call 833-VAX-HELP (833-829-4357) or email at waisrecords@doh.wa.gov.

13. What resources are available to assist employees in getting vaccinated?

Employees may use Miscellaneous Leave for a reasonable amount of time to travel and receive a COVID-19 vaccination, during scheduled work time. Mileage and other expenses associated with the Miscellaneous Leave are not reimbursed. Employees should work with their supervisors if they want to schedule this leave. Use code 9045 Miscellaneous Leave and put in the comment section – to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

The DOH has created a [Vaccine locator](#) to help employees locate where vaccinations are available. Further, to support employees working in response to wildland fires in a camp setting, we are putting measures in place working with the DOH to have vaccinations available, whenever possible.

14. Can an employee file a claim with Labor and Industries (L&I) for a reaction after being vaccinated for COVID-19?

Per L&I, yes, an employee may file a claim, but there is no presumption of coverage. Claims will be allowed for employees who have a reaction to the vaccine when it is required by the employer and/or by government order, rule, or law as a condition of employment. Other claims will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. More information can be found here <https://lni.wa.gov/agency/outreach/workers-compensation-coverage-and-coronavirus-covid-19-common-questions>.

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
VACCINATION REQUIREMENT**

15. If a claim is allowed for a reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, is the employee entitled to time-loss benefits?

Per L&I, yes. More information can be found here <https://lni.wa.gov/agency/outreach/workers-compensation-coverage-and-coronavirus-covid-19-common-questions>.

16. What if an employee will not be fully vaccinated by October 18, 2021, but they are retiring?

If the employee provides proof from the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) they have submitted retirement paperwork, the employee may use accrued leave or leave without pay until their retirement date, subject to the Collective Bargaining Agreements, Civil Service Rules and agency policy. Please note, this is only available through December 31, 2021.

17. If an employee chooses to retire, will they be able to before the October 18, 2021, deadline?

The first step for employees who wish to retire is getting the official retirement estimate completed. The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) will prioritize retirement requests for the earliest retirement dates. If a person plans to work at all in October, the retirement date would be November 1. See <https://www.drs.wa.gov/retirement-planning/checklist/>. For questions and additional information regarding retirement, contact DRS <https://www.drs.wa.gov>.

18. How does the vaccination requirement affect current recruitments?

Human Resources will update recruitment announcements and position descriptions with the new requirements. Recruitment is notifying all applicants of the October 18, 2021 vaccination requirement.

Vaccination status will be verified at the time an offer of employment is made. An accommodation may be available for individuals who have a sincerely held religious belief or a medical reason for not receiving the COVID-19 vaccination. Those individuals may request an accommodation through Human Resources at [DNR RE Protected Leave](#).

19. What if an employee has a sincerely held religious belief or a medical reason for not receiving the COVID-19 vaccination?

Employees who have a sincerely held religious belief or a medical reason for not receiving the COVID-19 vaccination may request an accommodation through DNR Human Resources at [DNR RE Protected Leave](#). All documentation regarding accommodation requests will be confidential and not maintained in employee's personnel file.

20. What forms are needed for an exemption/accommodation request?

Employees may submit a completed [Medical Accommodation Request](#) form or [Religious Accommodation Request](#) form. Human Resources may request an [Additional Information](#) form be completed to process religious accommodation requests. Forms need to be submitted to [DNR RE Protected Leave](#).

21. What if an employee has requested an exemption but an exemption determination has not been made as of October 18, 2021?

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
VACCINATION REQUIREMENT**

If an employee submits a request for an exemption/accommodation and cooperates with the process, but an exemption determination has not been made as of 10/18/2021, the employee will suffer no loss in pay until the exemption decision is provided.

22. *UPDATED* What if an employee's exemption request has been approved but an accommodation determination has not been made as of October 18, 2021?

If an employee submitted a request for an exemption/accommodation and cooperates with the process, and their exemption request has been approved, but an accommodation determination has not been made as of October 18, 2021, the following applies:

- If the agency determines the employee's work can be performed remotely and business needs can be met until an accommodation determination is made, the employee will be assigned to telework after 10/18/2021.
- Effective October 25, 2021 employees assigned to telework may use all applicable leave until an accommodation determination is made.

23. What are the steps for the accommodation process after an employee's exemption request is approved?

If an employee's exemption request has been approved, the agency will determine whether an accommodation can be provided, the form of the accommodation and the duration of the accommodation. Appointing Authorities will review the employee's position description and will seek information from the employee through an interactive process.

DNR will need to determine if an accommodation exists whereby an employee can perform the essential functions of their position and if an accommodation can be provided that sufficiently mitigates or eliminates the health and safety risk to employees and members of the public we serve. Accommodations must be in addition to existing protocols for non-vaccinated employees including required self-screening, wearing PPE, and socially distancing.

24. *UPDATED* What if an employee's exemption request is denied or an accommodation is not available?

If an employee's exemption request is denied or an accommodation is not available, the employee will have fifty-five (55) calendar days to provide proof of being fully vaccinated. The employee must provide proof of receiving their first dose in a two dose series (or the single dose for a single dose vaccine), within ten (10) calendar days of the determination notification.

Effective October 25, 2021: If the agency determines an employee's work can be performed remotely and business needs can be met while the employee becomes fully vaccinated, the employee will be assigned to telework. Employees may also use applicable leave during the fifty-five (55) calendar days. Please use MyPortal to submit leave during this period.

If the employee does not provide proof of being fully vaccinated within the fifty-five (55) calendar days, they will be separated.

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
VACCINATION REQUIREMENT**

25. What appeal rights do employees have if they are separated because they are not fully vaccinated by October 18, 2021?

Employees may utilize applicable collective bargaining agreements or civil service rules regarding separation from employment.

26. Are employees entitled to unemployment benefits if they are separated because they are not fully vaccinated by October 18, 2021?

Unemployment eligibility is determined by the Employment Security Department (ESD). ESD will examine a number of factors to make a determination. More information can be found here: [ESDWAGOV - COVID-19 Frequently asked questions - Workers](#).

27. Is there a new Personal Leave Day?

Yes, for union represented employees. After October 19, 2021 and no later than December 31, 2021, represented employees' leave accounts will be credited one (1) additional personal leave day. This personal leave day must be used by December 31, 2022.

28. How is the Commissioner of Public Lands able to institute this requirement?

The Commissioner is the administrator of the Department of Natural Resources. As administrator of the department, the Commissioner has responsibility for performance of all the powers, duties, and functions of the department (except those specifically assigned to the Board of Natural Resources) and is authorized to employ such personnel as may be required to perform the duties of this office. (RCW 43.30.105; RCW 43.30.421)

As the employer of personnel, the Commissioner has the obligation to provide a safe workplace free of known hazards. COVID-19 is a known hazard. The Commissioner also has the right to determine the conditions for employment with the agency. Establishing a vaccine requirement fulfills the Commissioner's obligation to provide a safe, hazard-free workplace and is within the Commissioner's prerogative as an employer.

Additional Resources (Source: EAP)

The EAP has a library of on-demand webinars hosted on YouTube to support employees as they navigate the challenges of COVID-19.

For all employees:

- [How to Build Resilience When Your Job Involves Helping Others in Crisis](#)
- [Navigating Change in Challenging Times](#)
- [Self-Care with the Washington State EAP](#)

For supervisors, managers and HR

- [Leading the Human Side of Change](#)
- [Leading Teams and Supporting Employees through COVID-19](#)

Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Resources

For state employees seeking assistance, contact EAP at (877) 313 – 4455 or [eap.wa.gov](#).