Purpose
In accordance with the District’s duty to provide and maintain a workplace that is free of known hazards, it is adopting this policy to safeguard the health of its employees and their families; its customers and visitors; and the residents of Cook County from infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, that may be reduced by vaccinations. This policy relates to COVID-19 and COVID-19 variants.

Policy Modification
Government and public health guidelines and restrictions and business and industry best practices regarding COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines are changing rapidly as new information becomes available, further research is conducted, and additional vaccines are approved and distributed. The District reserves the right to amend or cancel this policy at any time. Should the District amend this policy, notice shall be provided to the unions representing District employees. Should the unions have any concerns, a meeting will be convened to allow for bargaining over the impact of any amendments.

Scope
All employees must be fully vaccinated no later than February 7, 2022 or be subject to weekly COVID-19 testing. Employees are encouraged to be fully vaccinated, but employees are not required to get vaccinated. However, employees that are not fully vaccinated will be required to provide proof of weekly COVID-19 testing and wear a face covering in the workplace. District contractors and vendors working on District property shall be required to be fully vaccinated or be subject to weekly COVID-19 testing. Contractors will be responsible for enforcing these provisions.

Procedures
- Proof of Vaccination
  - All employees are required to report their vaccination status and, if vaccinated, provide proof of vaccination. Employees must provide truthful and accurate information about their COVID-19 vaccination status, and, if applicable, their testing results. Employees not in compliance with this policy will be subject to discipline.
  - Employees that are vaccinated will be required to show proof that they are fully vaccinated to the Human Resources Department by February 7, 2022.
  - Acceptable proof of vaccination would include the employee’s COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card obtained at the time of vaccination; copy of immunization records from a public health, state, or tribal immunization information system; or documentation from a medical provider of vaccination. Documentation other than the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card must include the employee’s name, the type and brand of the vaccine, the date the employee received each dose of the vaccination, and the health care professional(s) or clinic site(s) that administered the vaccine.
  - Vaccination records must be submitted by scanning a copy of the record or uploading a picture of the document to the COVID-19 portal. The portal is compliant with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements for keeping data secure.
An employee is considered fully vaccinated 14 days after receiving the final dose of the Pfizer or Moderna two-shot vaccine or the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Employees that have received only the first dose of a two-dose vaccine or that have received the final dose of the vaccine less than 14 days ago, will be considered partially vaccinated for purposes of this policy.

COVID-19 Testing

- Employees that do not submit proof of vaccination by February 7, 2022 will be required to wear a face covering in the workplace and undergo COVID-19 testing once per calendar week and submit their first COVID-19 test result by February 15, 2022.
- Employees that will be subject to the testing requirement will be notified by the Human Resources Department.
- Employees are responsible for obtaining COVID-19 tests on their own time at no cost to the District except for costs associated with testing covered under the District’s health plan. Employees are also responsible for reporting the test results on a weekly basis as outlined in this policy. Only results from laboratory-based tests such as PCR will be accepted. Self-administered tests and antibody tests will not be accepted. The District will routinely post a listing of free COVID-19 testing sites on the District’s employee portal. The District will consider and evaluate any new testing methods, including test kits issued by the federal government, for future compliance with the testing provision of this policy.
- Test results must be submitted by close of business on Tuesday each week. The test result submitted must be from a test taken within the prior 4 days (e.g., Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or Monday). Employees who are on approved time off for an entire week or longer are not required to submit tests for that time period for which they are off work.
- Test results must be submitted to the secure COVID-19 portal by scanning a copy of the test result or uploading a picture of the document each week. The test date must be clearly indicated on the results and must be within the prior 4 days.
- Employees who fail to report test results as required under this policy will be placed on a non-disciplinary, no-pay status until their test results are reported. Continued failure to report test results as required under this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. In rare cases where employees can demonstrate that testing was completed timely and test results were not available due to laboratory delays or other issues beyond the employees’ control, the District may allow such employees to continue to work if asymptomatic. These situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and the District will consult and advise the appropriate bargaining unit representative, where applicable, before making the final determination.
- Employees who have received a positive COVID-19 test or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider, are not required to undergo the weekly COVID-19 testing for 90 days following the date of their positive test or diagnosis.

Face Coverings

- The District will require all employees who are not fully vaccinated to wear a face covering. Employees that do not report to work with a face covering shall be provided one by the District.
Face coverings must: (i) completely cover the nose and mouth; (ii) be made with two or more layers of a breathable fabric that is tightly woven (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source); (iii) be secured to the head with ties, ear loops, or elastic bands that go behind the head. If gaiters are worn, they should have two layers of fabric or be folded to make two layers; (iv) fit snugly over the nose, mouth, and chin with no large gaps on the outside of the face; and (v) be a solid piece of material without slits, exhalation valves, visible holes, punctures, or other openings. Acceptable face coverings include clear face coverings or cloth face coverings with a clear plastic panel that, despite the non-cloth material allowing light to pass through, otherwise meet these criteria and which may be used to facilitate communication with people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or others who need to see a speaker’s mouth or facial expressions to understand speech or sign language respectively. Employees who are not fully vaccinated must wear face coverings over the nose and mouth when indoors and when occupying a vehicle with another person for work purposes.

The following are exceptions to the District’s requirements for face coverings:
1. When an employee is alone in a room with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door.
2. For a limited time, while an employee is eating or drinking at the workplace or for identification purposes in compliance with safety and security requirements.
3. When an employee is wearing a respirator or facemask.
4. Where the District has determined that the use of face coverings is infeasible or creates a greater hazard (e.g., when it is important to see the employee’s mouth for reasons related to their job duties, when the work requires the use of the employee’s uncovered mouth, or when the use of a face covering presents a risk of serious injury or death to the employee).

Obtaining a Vaccination and Changes in Vaccination Status

- An employee that becomes fully vaccinated after the deadline may submit proof of vaccination status to the Human Resources Department as set forth above. Once proof of vaccination is verified, the Human Resources Department will contact the employee to confirm removal of the test requirement.
- An employee interested in obtaining a COVID-19 vaccination may be provided up to 4 hours of paid time off per dose to attend a vaccination appointment during regular work hours. If an employee spends less time getting the vaccine, only the necessary amount of time will be granted. Employees should submit a request for this time off to their supervisor and obtain approval in advance of the appointment date. If an employee is vaccinated outside of their normal work schedule, they will not be compensated.
- Employees may utilize up to two workdays of sick leave immediately following each dose if they have side effects from the COVID-19 vaccination that prevents them from working. Employees who do not have available sick leave will be granted up to two days of paid administrative leave (Payroll code 0016) immediately following each dose if necessary.
• Employee Quarantines, Employee Notification of COVID-19 Positive Test Result and Return to Work Criteria
  • Employees who test positive should immediately report this result to the Employee Relations Section of Human Resources and should not report to the worksite. Employees that do not report a positive test result may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
  • An employee removed from the workplace because they are COVID-19 positive will be required to contact the Employee Relations Section of Human Resources to determine the appropriate return to work protocols.
  • An employee required to quarantine in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines will also be required to utilize discretionary time (e.g., sick, compensatory time, vacation, etc.) for any required quarantine period.

• New Hires
  • All new employees are required to comply with the vaccination, testing and face covering requirements outlined in this policy as a condition of employment. Potential candidates for employment will be notified of the requirements of this policy prior to the start of employment. Employees hired after the effective date of this policy must be fully vaccinated by their actual start date or submit to the regular testing protocol outlined above. Proof of vaccination will be required prior to the employee’s actual start date. Alternatively, new hires who are not fully vaccinated must provide a negative test result from a laboratory-based test no more than 4 days prior to their start date. New hires who fail to comply with this condition of employment shall be subject to termination.

• Compliance
  • All employees are required to comply with this policy. Violations of this policy, including but not limited to, refusal to consent to testing in accordance with this policy, or providing false or misleading information related to vaccination status or test results may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Any disciplinary action taken by the District will not exclude any rights employees are entitled to under any collective bargaining agreement.

• Requests for Exceptions
  • Employees may be legally entitled to a reasonable accommodation if they cannot wear a face covering (as otherwise required by this policy) because of a disability, or if the provisions in this policy for testing for COVID-19, and/or wearing a face covering conflict with a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance. Requests for exceptions and reasonable accommodations shall be directed to the Employee Relations Section.

• Other
  • Information related to vaccination status will be maintained by the Human Resources Department and will only be used in the administration of this policy.
  • All medical information collected from individuals, including vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing, will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy.
Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Employee Relations Section at InfoCovid19@mwr.org or (312) 751-5163.

Sincerely,

Brian A. Perkovich, Executive Director

BKS:JEF

cc: Department Heads, Mmes. Riedle, Fore, Boyle, Berry