

Town of High Level Policy 267-21

Title: **Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy**

Authority: Council
Date: February 28, 2022
Rescinds: N/A
Revision: 2.0
Status: Active
Attachments:

1.0 Policy

This Policy outlines the requirement for all Town of High Level *Employees* and municipal program volunteers to be fully vaccinated against *COVID-19*. The Town of High Level has been diligent in establishing protocols to prevent the spread of *COVID-19* within the workplace throughout the pandemic. However, vaccination is considered the best defence we have to contracting, becoming seriously ill from, and/or transmitting *COVID-19*. Further, widespread vaccination against *COVID-19* is considered critical to ending the pandemic and ultimately returning to “normal” operations without restrictive public health measures.

2.0 Purpose

The Town of High Level fosters and maintains a healthy and safe environment in the best interests of all *Employees*, clients and other stakeholders. *COVID-19* is a recognized workplace hazard and vaccinations are universally considered a safe and effective control to address and mitigate the risk of transmission in the workplace. As a part of the *Employer’s* efforts to foster and maintain a healthy and safe workplace, the *Employer* is mandating that all *Employees* be fully vaccinated against *COVID-19*, unless *Exempt*, having regard to, among other things, the following:

- a. The Town of High Level’s occupational health and safety legal obligations;
- b. The ongoing unprecedented risks posed by the *COVID-19* pandemic to the health and safety of individuals, organizations, and broader society generally;
- c. The emergence of the *COVID-19* variants, which, relative to other *COVID-19* strains, could be significantly more infectious and may cause more severe illness;
- d. The risk of increase in *COVID-19* positive cases and infection rates; and
- e. *COVID-19* vaccination safeness and effectiveness.

3.0 Definitions

Any words or phrases with specific definitions listed below are identified throughout the Policy by being formatted as bold and italic text.

“*COVID-19*” means the disease caused by the SARS-CoV2 virus, including any new strains of such virus, and for the purposes of this Policy a reference to the “COVID-19 pandemic” includes a reference to COVID-19.

“*Employee*” means an individual employed by the Town of High Level including all elected officials, volunteers, temporary, seasonal and casual employees, supervisors, managers, officers, and directors., as determined by the Chief Administrative Officer in the event of uncertainty.

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“*Exempt*” means an exemption from the requirement to receive a *Vaccine* pursuant to section 4.6 of this Policy.

“*Vaccine*” means a full dose of a vaccine for the SARS-CoV2 virus that has been approved for use by Health Canada on an interim or permanent basis.

“*Employer*” means the Town of High Level.

4.0 Policy Details

4.1 Unless *Exempt*, all current *Employees* must be fully vaccinated by the deadline established by the *Employer*.

4.2 *Employees* hired by the *Employer* will be required to provide proof to the *Employer* of having received a *Vaccine*, unless *Exempt*.

4.3 *Employees* who fail or refuse to comply with this Policy will be subject to the following, at the discretion of the *Employer*, having regard to the circumstances:

- a. Termination of such *Employee*'s employment for just cause without advance notice or payment in lieu thereof;
- b. An immediate requirement on the *Employee* to provide the *Employer* with proof in a form satisfactory to the *Employer* of negative *COVID-19* test results every 72 hours at least. Such tests must be privately paid for and approved by Health Canada. The *Employer* will not pay for such tests and the *Employee* must complete the tests on their own personal time and without pay. Negative test results from tests completed by Alberta Health Services or Alberta Precision Laboratories will not be accepted;
- c. Immediately being placed on an unpaid leave of absence until such time as the *Employee* complies with this Policy or Health Canada declares the *COVID-19* pandemic is over; and/or
- d. Such other consequence as determined by the *Employer*.

4.4 The *Employer* is responsible for:

- a. Providing *Vaccine* educational materials to *Employees*;
- b. Providing existing *Employees* with up to three hours of regular pay in order to attend an appointment for the first and second dose of *COVID-19* vaccination.
- c. Establishing or modifying deadlines for *Employees* to receive a *Vaccine* or to submit a request to be *Exempt*, having regard to the availability of the *Vaccine* from health authorities;
- d. Maintaining records confirming *Vaccines* by *Employees*, and records relating to whether an *Employee* is *Exempt*, in accordance with applicable privacy legislation; and
- e. Processing *Employee* requests to be *Exempt* and ensuring that such requests to be *Exempt* are handled pursuant to applicable human rights legislation, where applicable.

4.5 *Employees* are responsible for:

- a. Taking all necessary steps to protect the health and safety of themselves and others in the workplace;
- b. Complying with all *Employer* policies and protocols to address the *COVID-19* pandemic;
- c. Fully cooperating with the *Employer* when making a request to be *Exempt*; and

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- d. Providing proof in a form satisfactory to the *Employer* of having received a *Vaccine* or submitting a request to be *Exempt* in accordance with the deadline established by the *Employer*.
- 4.6 An *Employee* may request that they be *Exempt* from the requirement to receive a *Vaccine* by submitting to the *Employer* a request for exemption based on one of the following:
- a. A medical condition which, in the opinion of a physician, renders the *Employee* unable to safely receive a *Vaccine*, provided that such request is submitted with a note or letter from such physician confirming the need for an exemption;
 - b. A sincerely held religious belief or practice which prohibits the *Employee* from receiving a *Vaccine*, provided that such request is submitted with records which, in the opinion of the *Employer* acting reasonably, establishes such belief or practice; or
 - c. A reason other than those set out in sections 4.6(a) or (b), along with such information and/or documentation as the *Employer* may reasonably require to consider the request to be *Exempt*, and its impact on the health and safety of the workplace.
- 4.7 Upon receipt of a request from an *Employee* that they be *Exempt*, the *Employer* shall consider the request in accordance with human rights legislation (where applicable) and shall communicate to such *Employee* whether the request is granted or refused. The *Employer* reserves the right to require additional information and/or documentation from the *Employee* as determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.8 Where an exemption is granted, the *Employer* may consider reasonable alternatives which would address the risk of the *COVID-19* pandemic and may make alterations to the terms and conditions of the *Employee*'s employment where necessary to achieve reasonable accommodation, including without limitation requiring the *Employee* to work from home, requiring the *Employee* to take on modified job duties to reduce risks to health and safety in the workplace, requiring the *Employee* to utilize personal protective equipment, or other alterations.
- 4.9 The decision by the *Employer* regarding an *Employee*'s request to be *Exempt* is final, subject to the discretion of the *Employer* to reconsider the request.
- 4.10 Having regard to the sensitivity of medical information, the *Employer* shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the information provided by *Employees* pursuant to this Policy is treated as confidential, is only made available to those persons who have a demonstrated need to know the information and is maintained only for such time as is necessary, having regard to the *COVID-19* pandemic and applicable legislation. Specifically, an *Employee* may satisfy the requirement of providing proof of vaccination by showing to the Human Resources Manager (or designate) their vaccination certificate without leaving a copy of the certificate with the *Employer*.
- 4.11 This Policy may be amended or replaced by the *Employer* in its discretion, having regard to changing circumstances.

5.0 Procedures

The Town of High Level has had great success in avoiding workplace transmission of *COVID-19*. The pandemic is anticipated to continue for many more months and possibly years. In order to provide a further, and more effective, layer of safety and protection, mandatory vaccinations are required of all *Employees*, unless they are *Exempt*.

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- 5.1. Administrative Directive 44-20 COVID-19 Protocol:
- a. The continued risk of a global respiratory disease pandemic (**COVID-19**) requires the provision of additional guidance and expectations for Town of High Level staff. This Directive is to assist in guiding Town staff regarding possible exposure through staff travel, normal operations, and community spread. The guidelines are to protect the safety of all Town of High Level staff and the local community while continuing to advance the Town's mission and fulfill the shared responsibility of employees to ensure a safe work environment.

6.0 Related Documents and Resources

- 6.1 Administrative Directive 44-20 COVID-19 Protocol
- 6.2 COVID-19 Vaccine – Questions and Answers July 2021 –
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/cee9c02d-dfd6-43f3-9b81-d339438c4edf/resource/13894f85-ef91-4411-8640-5c890557a671/download/covid-19-vaccine-questions-answers-for-public-and-healthcare-practitioners-2021-07.pdf>
- 6.3 Alberta Human Rights –
https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/employment/employee_info/Pages/employee_rights_and_responsibilities.aspx
- 6.4 Occupational Health and Safety –
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset?tags=Occupational+Health+and+Safety>
- 6.5 Government of Alberta – Workplace Safety –
<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/covid-19>
- 6.6 Town of High Level Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy FAQ's

7.0 Assistance & Interpretation Contact Information

Human Resources

Office: (780) 821-4005
Email: hrm@highlevel.ca

Health & Safety

Office: (780) 821-4007
Email: safety@highlevel.ca

Cell phone contact details may be listed in the staff directory.

8.0 Revision History

<i>Rev. No.</i>	<i>Date</i> (YYYY/MM/DD)	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
0.0	2021/09/16	Draft for Management Review	Replaced
0.1	2021/09/17	Draft for Council Review	Replaced
0.2	2021/09/24	Draft for Council Review after Legal Review	Replaced
1.0	2021/09/27	Approved by Council, Res# 345-21	Replaced
2.0	2022/02/28	Approved by Council, Res# 069-22	Active