



Governor Inslee's Vaccine Mandate Frequently Asked Questions

Many of the following Frequently Asked Questions (and answers) are copied directly from OSPI's *COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement for K-12 School Employees: Frequently Asked Questions* updated August 23, 2021. If you'd like to read the complete FAQ published by OSPI, click [HERE](#).

Q1: What is the Governor's vaccine mandate?

A: On August 18, 2021 Governor Inslee issued a proclamation requiring that all K-12 educators, school staff, coaches, bus drivers, school volunteers, and others working in public schools must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 18, 2021 as a condition of employment.

Q2: When do I need to receive my vaccination to be in compliance with the order?

A: All school employees must be fully vaccinated by October 18, 2021. Individuals are considered fully vaccinated once it has been 14 days since their last dose of Pfizer or Moderna or 14 days since their only dose of Johnson & Johnson. Below is a table with deadlines by which employees must receive their vaccine to be in compliant by October 18, 2021.

Vaccine	Series Dose Requirement	First Dose no Later Than	Second Dose	Completed Series	Fully Vaccinated
Pfizer	2 doses, 21 days apart	09/13/21	10/04/21	10/04/21	10/18/21
Moderna	2 doses, 28 days apart	09/06/21	10/04/21	10/04/21	10/18/21
Johnson & Johnson	Single dose	10/04/21	N/A	10/04/21	10/18/21

Q3: Can SEA bargain additional time for members to get vaccinated?

A: No, the dates set forth by the Governor's order cannot be bargained and the District must enforce the timeline.

Q4: Are substitute teachers included in this requirement?

A: Yes. Substitute teachers will need to follow the same process as other employees in the district.

Q5: As COVID-19 vaccine boosters become available, will school employees be required to get the booster and provide proof to the district?

A: At this time, boosters are not included in the Governor's order. The only requirement now is for school employees to receive their first and second dose of Pfizer or Moderna, or their only dose of Johnson & Johnson, by October 4, 2021 to be fully vaccinated by October 18, 2021.

Q6: Can I go back to work this fall before I am vaccinated?

A: Yes. If you are not fully vaccinated, you may continue working as you take the time to get fully vaccinated or request a medical or religious exemption and seek an accommodation for that exemption from the District. You must be fully vaccinated or be granted an accommodation for an approved exemption by October 18, 2021 as a condition of continued employment.

Q7: What is considered proof of vaccination?

A: Employees must provide proof of vaccination by showing their vaccine card, certificate of COVID-19 vaccination, or Washington State Immunization Information System printout. See the [Visual Guide to Official Washington State Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination](#) to see what each kind of documentation looks like.

Q8: How does an employee submit proof of vaccination?

A: The District is required to verify the vaccination status of staff as required by DOH and L&I. The District will not maintain copies of actual employee vaccination records and will only release an identifiable verification record where required to do so by court order. (H&S TA August 2021, Proof of Vaccination section 1D, page 2)

Employees should follow the process identified by the District for providing proof of vaccination. The WA state DOH current processes and information around vaccinations for schools can be found here: [For Schools and Early Learning Programs :: Washington State Department of Health](#)

Q9: Can employees prove their vaccination status through an attestation?

A: No. Employees must provide proof by showing one of the documents listed in the [Visual Guide to Official Washington State Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination](#).

Q10: How can I request a medical or religious exemption?

A: Employees should contact SPS's Human Resources office to learn the District's process and to obtain supporting documents, for requesting a medical or religious exemption.

Q11: Can I rely on getting a religious or medical exemption?

A: No. The District is still determining requirements for exemptions in alignment with state guidelines. Even if an employee qualifies for an exemption, the District is not required to provide an accommodation if the accommodation is not reasonable or would cause undue hardship as provided in the ADA, Title VII, and the WLAD. In addition, Public Health states vaccination along with masking are the strongest mitigation strategies against contracting COVID-19. You should NOT expect to get an exemption and accommodation.

Q12: Who is responsible for reviewing and approving requests for medical or religious accommodations?

A: SPS's Human Resources department should be responsible for reviewing, approving, and communicating approval of medical and religious accommodation requests. The HR department should follow a standard process for every request and should examine each request on its own by analyzing the specific facts surrounding the request.

Q13: What if an unvaccinated employee contracts COVID-19 and is recommended to wait 90 days before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, which would make them miss the October 18 deadline?

A: If an employee is advised by their medical provider that they should not get the vaccine within a particular timeframe, and following that recommendation would cause the employee to miss the October 18, 2021 deadline, the employee must seek a medical exemption and accommodation or would be separated from employment after the deadline. However, they would need to become fully vaccinated as soon as the waiting period ends.

Q14: Can employers ask job applicants about their vaccination status?

A: Yes. It is not a disability-related inquiry under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ask an applicant if they have been vaccinated. However, follow-up questions about why a person is not vaccinated should not occur until after a job offer is made since such questions may reveal a disability. [See more guidance from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#). OSPI recommends districts update their existing and upcoming job postings and offer letters, notify active applicants for open positions about the new requirement, and put a plan in place to verify the vaccination status of new employees.