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Vaccine Requirement Guide

As the COVID-19 Delta variant continues to impact the United States, more **employers** are requiring vaccination for their workers. Vaccines are currently the best tool to help end the pandemic. Vaccines are safe and effective at slowing COVID-19 transmission, as well as reducing the risk of severe illness and hospitalization in individuals who do become infected despite being vaccinated. In order to reach community immunity, an estimated 70-90% vaccination rate will be required. A recent survey from the National Safety Council (NSC) found when employers required vaccines, there was a 35% increase in workers who got the shot. To learn more about how and if your organization should require vaccinations, see the guide below.

Levels of vaccine requirements:

1. **Honor System** – Requiring workers to be vaccinated to return to work or to loosen mask mandates without requiring proof of vaccination status.

2. **Partial Requirement** – Requiring workers to either show proof of vaccination status, or submit to frequent COVID-19 testing.

3. **Soft Requirement** – Requiring workers to show proof of vaccination status before returning to certain job functions or to enter a non-remote workplace.

4. **Hard Requirement** – Requiring all workers to show proof of vaccination status to do their work.

Considerations around requiring vaccines:

1. **Cost of not requiring vaccinations**

   a. **Losing workers** – The time required to quarantine someone with COVID-19 and anyone who has recently come into contact with them is 10 days. Since vaccinations are the safest way to prevent the spread of COVID-19, a vaccinated workforce is going to lessen lost time and productivity. A severe case of COVID-19 could potentially result in extended worker hospitalizations, temporary or permanent disability due to "**Long COVID**," or even death.

Beyond the cost and logistical issues associated with COVID-19 and quarantine, broad support for mandates exists among workers. In fact, 38% of surveyed workers say they would consider **quitting their current job** if their employer does not implement a mandate. This suggests a significant segment of the workforce is not comfortable working in proximity to unvaccinated individuals. Especially among younger workers, mandates in some cases may help retain workers.

b. **Risk to the community** – Non-vaccinated people are at a higher risk of passing COVID-19 to others, even causing breakthrough infections in vaccinated individuals. A workforce with a significant population of non-vaccinated individuals poses a risk to the communities in which they work. By requiring your workers to get vaccinated, your organization will help protect the communities where your workers perform job functions.

2. **Feasibility of getting vaccinated for your workers**

    a. **Access to transportation** – How feasible is it for your workers to go somewhere to get vaccinated? A study from NSC found vulnerable populations (English as a second language, the LGBTQ community, foreign-born citizens, etc.) and rural residents have a harder time accessing healthcare than others. If your workforce employs a high number of people in vulnerable populations, or is located in a rural area, you may want to consider providing transportation to vaccine clinics or hosting an on-site clinic, if possible.

    b. **Paid time off** – Are you offering Paid Time Off (PTO) for your workers to get vaccinated and for recovery time? NSC recommends employers offer PTO (typically 4 hours) for each vaccine dose as well as additional time for side-effect recovery, as needed.

3. **Where are people working –** The table below highlights which options might be right for your organization depending on your workforce:

Remote Workforce	Hybrid Workforce	In-Person Workforce
If your workforce is able to work from home without coming into physical contact with each other, the **Honor System** might be the highest requirement needed.	If you allow hybrid options (working part time from home and part time from the office), a **Partial** or **Soft Requirement** may be the best choice for your workers.	The biggest threat of infection is caused by the virus-containing droplets exhaled by an infected person. People who work in close proximity indoors are at the highest risk for spreading the virus. If your workers are frequently performing job functions in close proximity to one another and/or indoors, a **Soft** or **Hard Requirement** might be safest for your organization.

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Additional resources:

Health Action Alliance - Should I require COVID-19 vaccinations for my employees?
https://www.healthaction.org/reopening-questions#Q1

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Vaccination rate tracker
https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations_vacc-total-admin-rate-total

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – How is COVID-19 spread?
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Quarantining after getting COVID-19
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html

National Safety Council – Vaccine Guidance for Employers
https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/bfa5e483-3ca6-4afe-b567-a237d7a7f1b7/recommended-actions.pdf

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