



CODE BRONZE
FAQ for Employees
Mandatory vaccination
ONTARIO + NOVA SCOTIA

Subject:	Mandatory Vaccination Policy and Procedures – VERSION 2
From:	Business Response Team
To:	VON Senior Managers and up
CC:	REs, Clinical Response Team, Command Team
Date:	November 4, 2021
Affected Employees	ALL VON Employees

This FAQ is for use with all employees. Please distribute to your managers, for their use with their employees.

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A. GENERAL POLICY INFORMATION

1 What is the policy?

VON's [mandatory vaccination policy](#) outlines what required by employees, students, contractors and volunteers, and responsibilities for employees. Vaccination is mandatory for all employees in Ontario by October 30th, and in Nova Scotia by November 30th. It is also mandatory that employees attest to their vaccination status.

Please read the policy carefully. Note that there are some differences in Ontario and Nova Scotia. These differences are due to government policy.

2 Why has VON mandated vaccination for all employees?

On September 29th, the Government of Nova Scotia announced a mandatory vaccination policy that applies to home care providers, with a deadline of November 30th. On August 17th, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) issued Directive 6, which required certain health service providers to develop a policy by September 7th.

VON must comply with government direction. While the directives are somewhat different in Ontario and Nova Scotia, all employees and students, volunteers and

contractors, must be vaccinated to continue work with VON. (Certain medical and human rights exemptions may apply). We are doing this to protect the health, safety and well-being of our employees, our clients and their families, and our communities.

3 What other organizations have gone to full mandatory vaccination for employees and others?

Many health, government and private organizations across Canada are requiring that their employees be vaccinated. In Ontario, [VON joined 22 other home and community care organizations](#) in announcing the move toward full vaccination of all Ontario-based employees, students, volunteers and contractors.

In Nova Scotia, government issued the mandate to include all employees of high risk settings, including all home care providers.

Hospitals, long-term care homes, the federal government and others have also issued mandatory vaccination policies for all employees and others they work with.

4 I don't trust/believe in the safety/efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines. I don't see why I should have to take a risk like this to do my job.

The last 20 months have demanded a lot of all of us, and we understand that some people remain hesitant about vaccination. Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to protect our communities, clients, colleagues and ourselves against COVID-19. Ultimately, vaccination is a personal choice.

VON is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees, clients, contractors, volunteers and students. VON has an obligation to take all reasonable measures to ensure the health and safety of our workers, as well as an obligation to comply with directives from our funders. This policy supports those obligations.

We do not want to lose employees because of this mandate, and understand this is a challenging time. There is a lot of information, and a lot of misinformation, circulating about COVID-19 vaccines. We encourage employees with doubts to seek out credible medical and public health sources for information about vaccines and vaccine safety. Here are three credible sources: [Government of Canada](#); [Government of Ontario](#) and [Government of Nova Scotia](#).

5 What does it mean to be fully vaccinated?

"Fully vaccinated" means having received the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine or combination of COVID-19 vaccines approved by Health Canada or the World Health Organization (WHO) (e.g., two doses of a two-dose vaccine series, or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series); and having received the final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago.

B. PROVIDING PROOF OF VACCINATION

6 What do I do to register my vaccination status?

Employees and volunteers must register their vaccination status, and the best way to do that is through [this secure e-form](#).

In addition to completing the form, employees who are not yet fully vaccinated but have the process underway, and employees seeking exemptions for medical or human rights reasons, must speak with their manager/supervisor, who will work with representatives from Human Resources on next steps.

7 What can I use to show my vaccination status?

You must use a government-issued document that includes your name, vaccination type and date(s) of vaccination.

8 What if my vaccination(s) are from outside of Canada?

If you are in Ontario, please see this link for details on what to do:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19_guidance_for_individuals_vaccinated_outside_of_ontario.pdf

If you are in Nova Scotia, please consult these links for more information:

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/#fully-vaccinated>

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/#out-of-province-vaccines>

9 I have already submitted my proof of vaccination to vaccinations@von.ca. Do I still need to complete the e-form?

Yes you do. Please note that all information sent to vaccinations@von.ca will be deleted.

C. EXEMPTIONS

The information in this section also applies to front-line volunteers

10 I think that I would qualify for a medical exemption. How do I get that?

You must first complete the e-form, and in that form, attest that you are seeking a medical exemption. You must then complete a VON medical accommodation request form and have a physician, or nurse practitioner complete VON's Physicians'/ Nurse Practitioners' Certificate. You can get the form(s) from your manager/supervisor. Once completed, both forms must be returned directly to your Occupational Health and Safety Specialist who will follow up with you.

11 I have a medical exemption. Is that all I need to have, or does someone have to approve it? If it has to be approved, who does the approving and how will I know?

You will hear from either your manager/supervisor, or from your Occupational Health and Safety Specialist.

12 I think I would qualify for a human rights exemption. How do I get that?

This will be handled on a case-by-case basis, with the right team supporting managers and staff. Once an employee has completed the attestation e-form, indicating that they are seeking an accommodation, your Manager/Supervisor will seek support from Labour Relations, who will complete the evaluation in order to determine whether the exemption may be approved.

D. EMPLOYEE IMPACT IF NOT VACCINATED

13 If I choose not to get vaccinated for personal reasons, what will happen to my employment at VON?

If an employee opts not to not comply with the terms laid out in the policy by the deadlines (October 30th for Ontario-based employees, and November 30th for Nova Scotia-based employees), they will be placed on unpaid leave of absence which may result in termination.

Employees being placed on leave must take the online [educational resources](#) posted on VON's Learning Management System (LMS) (accessible through any computer or smart device), either while on unpaid leave or before.

14 If I am placed on unpaid leave, how long will that go on for?

Employees who are placed on unpaid leave will receive a letter at that time, outlining potential outcomes of non-compliance.

15 If I haven't disclosed my vaccination status, or if I refuse to be vaccinated, can I opt to take the education and wear PPE, but not take regular testing?

No. Employees must complete the attestation e-form and must meet all other conditions of the policy.

16 What happens if I am unable to be fully vaccinated by the deadline, even though I want to be?

For employees unable to comply by the deadline, managers/supervisors are to work with the employee and Labour Relations to create a plan that supports compliance.

17 Can I use my sick banks instead of going on unpaid leave?

No. Medical leave/sick banks can only be used by employees who are sick. Employees must provide supporting medical documentation to support any medical claim.

18 Can I use vacation time before going on unpaid leave?

No, employees cannot use vacation time prior to going on unpaid leave.

19 If I don't want to be vaccinated and am terminated, will I receive severance? What about employment insurance (EI)? What happens to my pension?

Employees whose employment is terminated for failure to comply with the policy would not be eligible for notice or severance pay, and would most likely not be eligible to receive EI. Your pension will remain yours.

E. RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING:

The information in this section also applies to front-line volunteers

20 I have an exemption, or I am partially-vaccinated and have a plan in place to complete vaccination. Where/how do I get my rapid antigen tests?

In Ontario, at the outset, in-home rapid antigen test kits will be sent to employees' homes. This process will likely change after the initial kits delivered are used up (five weeks). The test kits will include instructions on use and reporting. You can get this information [here](#).

The process for Nova Scotia will be described shortly.

21 How/when do I take the rapid antigen tests? Who do I inform of results?

Employees must continue to follow normal screening procedures every day: [Employee & Volunteer Self Screener for COVID-19](#)

The in-home rapid antigen test kits contain clear instructions on how to perform the test and report the results. A video is also available to show you how to use the kit: <https://von.litmos.com?C=2136860>

Ontario employees who must take the tests can find clear instructions for testing and reporting here, in these documents: [Self-test instructions for employees](#); [BD Veritor self-test instructions](#); and [BTNX self-test instructions](#)>

22 What happens if my rapid antigen test is positive?

In Ontario, employees/volunteers must notify their manager/supervisor by phone, and then email their manager with the lot# from the sticker on your Ziploc bag and the picture of the result. Proceed to your public health unit for a PCR test, and follow their guidance for isolation. Testing and reporting instructions for Nova Scotia-based employees will be shared soon. Again, please refer to this document: [Self-test instructions for employees](#).

F. VOLUNTEER ATTESTATIONS

23 I work with Community Corporation members who don't want to get vaccinated. They say they are a separate organization and therefore not subject to VON's policy on mandatory vaccinations. What do I tell them?

Community Corporation members who work in direct contact with any VON employees or clients must comply with the policy. Further information will be provided as it is determined.

G. CARING FOR CLIENTS

24 What do I say if clients ask me if I am fully vaccinated?

You are not obliged to tell clients of your vaccination status. If you have been vaccinated and want to set their minds at ease, you may opt to tell them, but that is a personal choice. Clients should be reassured that you are self screening for illness daily, wear PPE on all visits, and that the PPE that you wear is to protect them, as well as to protect you. You may also opt to tell clients that VON has a mandatory vaccination policy in place.

25 Will clients and their families have to get vaccinated too?

This is outside of VON's scope. VON will continue to apply all of our PPE standards, including special standards for clients with COVID and those under precaution.

H. PRIVACY AND SECURITY OF INFORMATION:

For more information, please also see this Fact Sheet.

26 Who will have access to my vaccination status information?

Your vaccination status is personal information and it will only be accessible to or shared with VON staff who need to know your status to ensure compliance with the policy, or as required by law.

Access to the data is limited to those who need to use it, either for verification purposes, or for reporting to government.

No identifying personal information will be shared with anyone *inside* VON who does not need it for management purposes. No identifying information will be shared in required government reporting.

27 My understanding is that we are uploading the proof of vaccine under our employee numbers. The proof of vaccination includes part of my health card number, my date of birth and my legal name. Am I allowed to redact any of this information?

You may redact the last four digits of the health card number showing on the vaccination receipt. You may also redact EITHER the day and month of your birth date, OR the year of your birth date. Vaccine receipts that are altered in other ways (such as removing the employee's name) cannot be accepted as proof of vaccination.

28 How is vaccination information being verified or validated?

We are obliged to validate every proof of vaccination submitted. This validation is being done by a small group of VON employees trained to do the validation.