

Guideline for reporting COVID-19 vaccination: Health Care and Support Workers

The Direction

On 1 October 2021, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) issued a statement recommending mandatory vaccination for all workers in health care settings as a condition of work.

The Chief Health Officer of the ACT issued the *Public Health (Health Care and Support Workers COVID-19 Vaccination) Emergency Direction 2021* (the Direction) on 15 October 2021. The purpose of the Direction is to limit the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 within a particularly vulnerable population by restricting this vulnerable population from being exposed to unvaccinated workers within health care facilities.

The Direction allows for workers to apply for an exemption in exceptional circumstances.

The Direction requires that individuals who work in specific health care settings in the ACT will be required to have a COVID-19 vaccination. These settings include:

- any health care facility operated by Canberra Health Services;
- a public or private hospital;
- a day hospital, defined as a facility where a person is admitted for surgical or medical treatment and discharged on the same day;
- a hospice;
- workers who work for an ambulance or other patient transport service.

The Direction requires that a worker for a health care facility must not work at the premises of a health care facility in the Australian Capital Territory unless they have:

- i. received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccination by 29 October 2021; and
- ii. received at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccination by 1 December 2021; or
- iii. are a permitted person or a worker who has been granted an exemption for COVID-19 vaccination under paragraph 9 of the Direction.

The operator of a health care facility must take all reasonable steps to collect and maintain evidence of vaccination status or evidence of exemption for each worker of the health care facility prior to a worker attending work at a health care facility. The operator is responsible for ensuring the privacy of these records and must be able to produce evidence of vaccination status or evidence of exemption of employees at the health care facility if requested by an authorised person.

There may be occasions or exceptional circumstances whereby a worker is unable to fulfil the requirement to receive at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccination before they work at the healthcare facility, as briefly outlined below and in further detail in the ACT COVID-19 Vaccination Exemption Policy for Workers in Healthcare Facilities.

What is the reporting responsibility of staff in your organisation?

Health care and support workers are required to provide evidence to their employer, or an authorised person as determined by their employer, of their vaccination status from the Australian Immunisation Register (kept under the *Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015* (Cwlth)) to confirm they have received one or more doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Evidence of vaccination is required to be provided as follows:

- received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccination by 29 October 2021; and
- received at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccination by 1 December 2021.

What is the reporting responsibility of your organisation?

Health care facilities should establish their own policies and mechanisms to **record vaccination status of employees** and other persons who are captured by the Direction as requiring vaccination.

Some health care workers may not be suitable to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. In these instances, the Chief Health Officer, or an authorised delegate, may exempt a person (in writing) from vaccination for:

- a person who is unable, due to a medical contraindication, to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.
- a person for whom a COVID-19 vaccination is not reasonably available.
- other reasons as outlined in the criteria in the ACT COVID-19 Vaccination Exemption Policy for Workers in Healthcare Facilities.

The Chief Health Officer has delegated the responsibility for receiving and issuing exemptions to the Chief Executive of the relevant healthcare facility. Exemptions can be considered by the Chief Executive on receipt of a Vaccination Exemption Form should the reason for exemption align with the criteria as outlined in the ACT COVID-19 Vaccination Exemption Policy.

If exemptions are granted, the employer should consider putting in place risk mitigation measures and controls to manage workers who have received an exemption to manage work health and safety of the broader workforce.

How will this reported data be used?

ACT Health monitors compliance with the Direction. This means that periodically (at a minimum on a quarterly basis and soon after the dates of first and second doses required), ACT Health will ask for a report of the vaccination status of your organisation, as follows:

Vaccination report

Organisation name	<i>To be completed by organisation</i>
Date	<i>To be completed by organisation</i>

Total number of staff (Include breakdown by health care worker / other worker)	<i>To be completed by organisation</i>	Health care worker	Other worker
Number of staff who have received first dose of vaccination (Include breakdown by health care worker / other worker)	<i>To be completed by organisation</i>	Health care worker	Other worker
Number of staff who have received second dose of vaccination (Include breakdown by health care worker / other worker)	<i>To be completed by organisation</i>	Health care worker	Other worker
Number of staff exempted from vaccination (Include breakdown by health care worker / other worker)	<i>To be completed by organisation</i>	Health care worker	Other worker
Number of staff with 'unknown' status, or that do not consent to provide evidence of vaccination (Include breakdown by health care worker / other worker)	<i>To be completed by organisation</i>	Health care worker	Other worker
Any notes about impacts on your workforce e.g., number of staff leaving workforce due to vaccination requirement; number of staff moved to different duties or not able to undertake frontline duties if unvaccinated/exempted	<i>To be completed by organisation</i>		

Why do we need to report on the vaccination status of our organisation?

Health care settings have a high likelihood of providing care for people with COVID-19, resulting in higher rates of potential exposure to staff and patients. High vaccination coverage for workers in high-risk settings, such as hospitals and aged care facilities, and vulnerable communities is important to protecting the broader community from the risk associated with COVID-19 and ensuring that future outbreaks do not pose a higher risk to vulnerable groups.

Thank you for helping to keep the ACT Community safe.