



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY
Washington, DC
20240

October 5, 2021

Memorandum

To: DOI Human Capital Officers
DOI Human Resources Directors/Officers

From: Jennifer A. Ackerman
Director, Office of Human Capital
Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer

Subject: COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for New Hires

This memorandum outlines the Department of the Interior's implementation guidance to uphold the requirements established by [Executive Order \(EO\) 14043](#), titled, "Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees."

On September 9, 2021, President Biden signed EO 14043. As stated in Section 1 of the EO, the President has determined that to promote the health and safety of the Federal workforce and the efficiency of the civil service, it is necessary to require COVID-19 vaccination for all Federal employees, subject to such exceptions as required by law.

Bureaus and Offices are responsible for ensuring all Servicing Human Resources Offices (SHROs) are following this guidance, implementing the components of the EO, with key dates outlined in each of these following sections:

Current Federal Employees

For purposes of the EO and this memorandum the term "employee" refers to an employee as defined in 5 USC 2105. Employees are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second shot in a two-dose series, or two weeks after a single-shot series. In order to be vaccinated by November 22, 2021, employees should be aware of the following scheduling considerations, based on the type of vaccine they obtain:

- For Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, individuals should get their second shot 3 weeks (or 21 days) after the first. This means that in order for Federal employees to meet a November 22 deadline, they should receive their first vaccination no later than October 18, and their second dose no later than November 8.

- For Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, individuals should get their second shot 4 weeks (or 28 days) after their first. This means that in order for Federal employees to meet a November 22 deadline, they should receive their first vaccination dose no later than October 11, and their second dose no later than November 8.
- Because the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine only has one shot, Federal employees must get that dose by November 8, in order to meet a November 22, 2021 deadline to be fully vaccinated.

New Hires and Onboarding

All new employees must be fully vaccinated prior to entering on duty, subject to such exceptions as required by law. Beginning effective immediately, SHROs must address the vaccination requirement in their job opportunity announcements and in tentative and final offers of employment, as follows:

- 1. Job Opportunity Announcements.** When advertising vacancies, DOI will clearly describe in the “How to Apply” section of the job opportunity announcement the COVID-19 vaccination requirement and, for positions with a duty location having an official government worksite, information about DOI’s reentry plan, to the extent that plan has been finalized. The following language must be included in the “How to Apply” section of all job opportunity announcements, as applicable:
 - As required by [Executive Order 14043](#), Federal employees are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 regardless of the employee’s duty location or work arrangement (e.g., telework, remote work, etc.), subject to such exceptions as required by law. If selected, you will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and submit documentation of vaccination by November 22, 2021 or before your entry on duty date with [Bureau/Office], if after November 22. DOI will provide additional information regarding what information or documentation will be needed and how you can request of [Bureau/Office] a legally required exception from this requirement.
 - Due to COVID-19, the [Bureau/Office] is currently in an expanded telework posture. If selected, you may be expected to temporarily telework, even if your home is located outside the local commuting area. Once employees are permitted to return to the office, you will be expected to report to the duty station listed on this announcement in accordance with the Department’s reentry procedures provided by your Servicing Human Resources Office. At that time, you may be eligible to request to continue to telework one or more days per pay period depending upon the terms of the Department of the Interior’s telework policy.

When an individual fails to meet a requirement stated in the job opportunity announcement, Bureaus/Offices may take action up to and including rescinding the offer for an applicant or termination from service of a new employee (or removal for an employee who has accrued adverse action rights). However, Bureaus/Offices **may not**

use an applicant's vaccination status as a screen-out item when receiving applications for a vacancy.

Should Bureaus/Offices identify an urgent, mission-critical hiring need to onboard new staff prior to those new staff becoming fully vaccinated, the Bureau/Office head may delay the vaccination requirement for selected job applicants, such that they do not need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and submit documentation of proof of vaccination before appointment or onboarding with the Bureau/Office. In the case of such limited delays, new hires are required to be fully vaccinated within 60 days of their start date and to follow safety protocols for not fully vaccinated individuals until they are fully vaccinated.

- 2. Tentative and Final Offer Letters.** DOI will make offers of employment contingent on submission of acceptable documentation demonstrating compliance with the vaccination requirement in EO 14043. Bureaus/Offices will make edits to templates and system notices (via USAStaffing or alternate On-Boarding systems/process) and will provide information about the vaccination requirement in tentative and final offer letters.

To the greatest extent possible, SHROs must ensure these requirements are communicated to Selectees (pending final/firm offer for employment) and Hires (pending appointment/enter on duty). Communication must include issuance of amended tentative and final/firm offer letters, and a good faith effort to reach selectees and pending hires by telephone, notifying them of the Department of the Interior's adherence to vaccination requirement as prescribed by EO 14043. The following language can be included in tentative offer and final/firm offer letters to satisfy this requirement.

- Tentative Offer – This is a tentative offer of employment. If you receive a final offer, it will be contingent on your submission of acceptable documentation that proves you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 vaccination by the date set in the final offer letter. You can provide a copy of the record of immunization from a health care provider or pharmacy, a copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card, a copy of medical records documenting the vaccination, a copy of immunization records from a public health or state immunization information system, or a copy of any other official documentation containing required data points (type of vaccine administered, date(s) of administration, and the name of the health care professional(s) or clinic site(s) administering the vaccine(s)). DOI will comply with all applicable Federal laws governing the privacy and confidentiality of your documentation, including legal requirements under the Privacy Act and the Rehabilitation Act. DOI will provide additional information regarding how you can request of the [Bureau/Office] a legally required exception from this requirement, upon request.
- Final/Firm Offer – Documentation of proof of COVID-19 vaccination must be received by **[insert date -November 22, 2021 or before EOD, if after November 22]**. Applicants can provide a copy of the record of immunization from a health care provider or pharmacy, a copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card, a copy of medical records documenting the vaccination, a copy of immunization records from a

public health or state immunization information system, or a copy of any other official documentation containing required data points (type of vaccine administered, date(s) of administration, and the name of the health care professional(s) or clinic site(s) administering the vaccine(s)). DOI will provide additional information regarding how you can request of [Bureau/Office] a legally required exception from this requirement, upon request.

- 3. Employees Returning from Nonpay or Nonduty Status.** SHROs must require vaccination documentation (or a legally required exception) from employees who have been placed in a nonpay or nonduty status (such as seasonal employees) and are scheduled to return prior to the employee returning to pay or duty status. This includes employees on: furlough, suspension, leave without pay (LWOP), uniformed service obligation (USSERRA-38 U.S. Code Chapter 43), sabbatical, or any other prolonged absence by supervisory approval. Employees returning from nonpay or nonduty status prior to November 22, 2021, must provide documentation of COVID-19 vaccination by November 22, 2021. Employees returning from nonpay or nonduty status after November 22, 2021, must provide documentation of COVID-19 vaccination prior to their return to pay or duty status.
- 4. Urgent Mission Critical Hires.** The Secretary may approve urgent mission critical hires to onboard prior to those new employees becoming fully vaccinated. In this instance, the Secretary may delay the vaccination requirement for selected job applicants, such that they do not need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and submit documentation of proof of vaccination before appointment or onboarding with the agency. In the case of such limited delays, employees must be fully **vaccinated within 60 days of their start date and to follow safety protocols for not fully vaccinated individuals until they are fully vaccinated.** Those requests must include the number of positions, occupational series, and duty locations and be forwarded to the Office of Human Capital for consideration after approval by the appropriate Assistant Secretary.

Inquiries. For additional information on the COVID-19 vaccination requirement for Federal employees, please visit <https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/faq/vaccinations/>. If you or your staff have questions or need assistance regarding this guidance, please contact Landon Mock in the Office of Human Capital for Non-SES/SL and ST Landon_Mock@ios.doi.gov and for SES/SL and ST policy questions please contact Jonathan_Mack@ios.doi.gov.

cc: Bureau/Office Heads or equivalent
Servicing Human Resource Offices