

**Frequently asked questions from the Volunteers, Vaccinations and Preparedness Webinar - 8 December 2021**

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**PROVING YOU ARE VACCINATED**

**Q. Do organisations have to see proof of vaccination status or is the word of volunteers enough?**

A. The relevant supervisor needs to sight the volunteer's vaccination certificate and make record that this has been sighted. The record needs to include the person's name and date of the two doses. You do not need to retain a copy of the certificate. It is recommended that organisations implement a policy to cover their approach for this.

**Q. The wait times for GPs for access to proof of immunisation for non-technology users is proving to be a challenge. How do we approach this when we have volunteers throughout the state?**

A. Assistance is available through Service Tasmania shops, Library Tasmania, or Services Australia to access proof of vaccination. You can call the Australian immunisation register to request a hard copy be posted to the individual. **Ph: 1800 653 809**

**EXEMPTIONS**

**Q. Do vaccine exemption certificates need to be viewed? Do organisations need to put in place additional safety measures to protect the person/their staff?**

A. If someone is medically exempt, they need to provide exemption to their employer, if required to do so via the Public Health direction. Exemption certificates state that the person has a medical contraindication to the COVID-19 vaccines and will show the exemption period timeframe on it. Organisations need to sight the certificate and record the timeframe.

Safety measures to consider for a volunteer with a vaccine exemption certificate:

- Role relocation if possible
- PPE wearing – mask wearing

**Q. If I am immune compromised, how do I obtain a vaccine exemption?**

A. You must go through the process of getting exemption through your GP. Anxiety and personal belief don't fall as one of the exemption reasons.

## **BOOSTER SHOTS**

**Q. I know booster shots are not (currently) mandated but if an organisation is subject to the Public Health order for mandatory vaccination, what is the feeling around requesting voluntary disclosure of the booster shot?**

A. Booster shots are not mandated through Public Health Direction at present. If the individual wishes to personally disclose they have received the booster vaccine, this is fine, and organisations should make a record of this.

## **VACCINATION MANDATION**

**Q. How do we know what we can ask of volunteers in our retail stores around vaccinations?**

A. [The WorkSafe Tasmania website](#) is a great resource around creating a risk assessment for your organisation and venue.

**Q. How do we manage staff who are not comfortable to work with unvaccinated clients?**

A. Your organisation could consider reallocation of roles if your workforce can sustain this to address this request. Hold discussions with individuals who have concerns over risk - would they consider wearing a mask to reduce risk of exposure, for example?

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS / VOLUNTEER RUN ACTIVITY**

**Q. For 'volunteer-run' events, do we need to gauge vaccination status of participants? How do small volunteer-ran community groups manage this?**

A. There is an [Events framework](#) in place to support organisations/events in the measures they need to have in place to run an event.

## **VENUES**

**Q. Is a business, venue or event obliged to notify patrons that they've been exposed to COVID-19 and need to get tested?**

A. If identified as an exposure site, Public Health will work closely with operators of the site to access close contacts and casual contacts. These people will be contacted by Public Health, to be questioned and advised of any requirements to undertake. A liaison officer from Public Health will be appointed. It is not the responsibility of the site operator to do this.

**Q. How do we handle visitors who refuse to indicate their vaccination status or sign in?**

If someone refuses to use the Check-in Tas App or check-in sheet, there is no requirement for the site operator to refuse entry. The site operator does not need to take a compliance action on behalf of this directive. A failed check-in can be reported if the organisation wishes to do so.

**INSURANCE & RISK**

**Q. Volunteers are not covered under workers compensation – where does this leave organisations if a volunteer contracts COVID-19 while volunteering?**

A. Talk to your insurance provider, see if you have a Volunteer Personal Accident Injury policy which often excludes illnesses. If a volunteer contracts COVID-19 while volunteering, you need to be able to confirm this happened at your event/organisation.

**Q. How can an organisation strike the right balance with managing the legal parameters for mandating vaccinations (when your organisation isn't part of the Public Health directive) and the WorkSafe parameters, in the event an employee or volunteer contracts the virus at work?**

A. It's important to seek advice from a legal team/lawyer. Ensure that everyone is meeting Government legislation at a minimum (using hand sanitiser, Check-in Tas app, etc.) Check your own insurance, understand what your current policy covers and isn't covering. Make sure your administration processes are in place for your volunteer program – i.e. timesheets/sign in/out processes.

**VOLUNTEERS**

**Q. If a volunteer refuses to vaccinate and an organisation cannot find alternative work for them, can the volunteer be asked to leave/resign/retire? Should job descriptions for volunteer positions now be updated to reflect mandatory vaccination?**

A. If the organisation falls under the Public Health directive – mandatory vaccination – the volunteer will need to retire. Outside of mandatory vaccination settings, it will become an issue for the organisation to develop a policy. Organisations are encouraged to seek legal advice for this.

Position descriptions for organisations that fall under the Public Health directive, yes, they should include the requirement for COVID-19 vaccination. If you are not within the mandatory vaccination scope – it may be good to include but is at the organisation's discretion.

Check out the [WorkSafe Tasmania templates](#) on risk management.