

Environment and Natural Resources

COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines

PURPOSE

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines (Guidelines) have been developed to provide direction and information to supervisors and employees about the implementation of the Amended Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (Policy). They are also intended to provide employees with the information necessary to arrange for vaccination, if necessary, and to obtain proof of vaccination documentation ahead of the November 30, 2021 implementation date.

Amendments to the Policy have been made to ensure that the GNWT follows evolving best practice standards in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic to protect employees and members of the public. ENR Guidelines will be updated as required.

POLICY BASE

These Guidelines are consistent with and support the implementation of the [Amended GNWT COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) and the Amended Corporate COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Guidelines.

SCOPE

The Policy concerns vaccination against COVID-19, or Coronavirus disease, an infectious respiratory illness caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), and the implementation of other workplace safety precautions in lieu of vaccination.

This Policy and the present Guidelines apply to all employees of ENR.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms apply in these Guidelines:

COVID-19 – or Coronavirus disease is an infectious respiratory illness caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Deputy Head – the Deputy Minister of a department, the Chief Executive Officer of a public committee, board or council, or such a person as may be appointed or designated as Deputy Head.

Employees – means all members of the public service as defined by the *Public Service Act*.

Fully Vaccinated – for the purposes of this Policy, a person is considered Fully Vaccinated 14 days after receiving the final dose in the full series of a Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccine or an approved combination of Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccines.

GUIDELINES

General

ENR is committed to ensuring a safe working environment for our employees and the members of the public we serve.

All ENR Employees are required to be Fully Vaccinated by November 30, 2021, or will be required to wear ENR designated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and comply with ENR COVID-19 testing protocols.

Submitting Proof of Vaccination

ENR Employees must provide documentation setting out their proof of vaccination on or before November 30, 2021.

Acceptable Proof of Vaccination

Acceptable proof of vaccination documentation must be an official record from a public health office in the jurisdiction(s) where the employee received the vaccine dose(s) and must include the following information:

- i. The issuing authority of the vaccination record;
- ii. The Employee's full name;
- iii. The name/brand of the vaccine(s) received; and
- iv. The date(s) of vaccination.

ENR Employees will submit their proof of vaccination using the Human Resources Information System (HRIS). Instructions for submitting proof of vaccination through HRIS will be published on the [MyHR website](#).

ENR Employees who may require assistance with submitting their proof of vaccination should speak with their supervisor so that arrangements can be made in advance of November 30, 2021.

The Human Resources Branch of the Department of Finance is responsible for securing personal information submitted by ENR Employees in accordance with the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (ATIPPA) and for verification of Employee vaccination information.

Upon submission of the Employee's proof of vaccination documents, the information will be verified and the Employee's direct supervisor will be notified by the Human Resources Branch that the Employee has submitted proof of vaccination.

The information verified will be:

- i. The issuing authority of the vaccination record;
- ii. The Employee's full name;
- iii. The name/brand of the vaccine(s) received; and
- iv. The date(s) of vaccination.

All proof of vaccination documents will be securely stored in HRIS.

The Employee's direct supervisor may maintain a record of which employees have provided proof of vaccination for the purpose of enforcing PPE use and COVID-19 testing protocols under the Policy.

Use of and Access to Employee Information

ENR Employee vaccination status information may only be accessed as necessary for implementation of the Policy. Any access of employee vaccination status information for any purpose other than to confirm vaccination status to ensure use of PPE and adherence to testing protocols, or as otherwise allowed or required by law, is prohibited.

In the event of any unauthorized access to an Employee's vaccination status information, the Employee will be immediately advised of the breach of personal information and circumstances relating to the breach. The GNWT will follow the appropriate steps in the ATIPPA to review and report the privacy breach.

ENR Employees may access their own vaccination status information through HRIS.

Other Measures to protect the safety of employees and members of the public

ENR Employees who do not provide proof of full vaccination by November 30, 2021, will be required to wear PPE designated by ENR in accordance with its Exposure Control Plan at all times in the workplace, including at their desks if in cubicles or in spaces where employees interact with members of the public or other employees. Such employees will also be required to undergo regular testing for COVID-19 as directed by ENR until they provide proof of vaccination.

Employees who refuse to wear PPE or participate in testing protocols required by ENR will be directed to take a leave without pay until they comply with ENR PPE and testing protocols.

Personal Protective Equipment

ENR Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination by November 30, 2021 will be required to wear a GNWT-authorized face mask while completing their duties. These employees may also be required to wear other PPE as designated by ENR, such as eye protection and gloves, depending on the employees' duties, level of contact with colleagues and members of the public, and other hazard control measures in place at the worksite. This arrangement will be determined on an individual basis with supervisors, and in accordance with Workers Safety and Compensation Commission approved and Office of the Chief Public Health Office recommended Exposure Control Plans.

Required PPE will be provided by the Department. Face shields, buffs, neck gaiters, scarfs, bandanas, or masks with exhaust valves are not acceptable for use under the Policy and these Guidelines.

If an employee cannot wear an authorized face mask due to an accommodation they can speak with their supervisor about alternative authorized PPE.

Providing proof of vaccination does not release Employees from other required use of PPE or adherence to COVID-19 testing in accordance with Chief Public Health Officer orders, and protocols contained within ENR's Exposure Control Plans.

COVID-19 Testing

ENR Employees who do not provide proof of vaccination and who are not subject to accommodation will be required to participate in regular testing for COVID-19 in advance of attendance at a GNWT worksite and as directed by the ENR. Testing protocols are currently in development and these Guidelines will be updated with further details about testing as soon as possible.

Duty Travel

Duty travel may require ENR Employees to be fully vaccinated and to have submitted proof of vaccination. Use of PPE and testing for COVID-19 in lieu of vaccination may not be permitted.

Where permitted, Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination shall wear ENR designated PPE for the duration of all duty travel, except at times when they are alone in their travel accommodations or dining. This includes travel time to and from Duty Travel destinations.

All ENR Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination will be required to travel individually in a vehicle when attending Duty Travel by ground.

All ENR Employees who have provided proof of vaccination will be required to have their own accommodations while on Duty Travel, where possible. ENR Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination will require their own accommodations.

Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination must be able to complete testing requirements while on Duty Travel.

If any of the above requirements cannot be met, an ENR employee who has not provided proof of vaccination will not be approved for Duty Travel.

Accommodations

Accommodations will be made for Employees who are both unable to be vaccinated and unable to wear mandatory PPE or undergo regular testing for verified medical reasons or based on protected grounds under the *Human Rights Act*.

ENR Employees seeking accommodation are subject to the *Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy* and the *Duty to Accommodate Policy Application Guidelines*.

Requests for accommodation under the Policy, or Guidelines due to a medical or human rights exemption to COVID-19 vaccination must be made to ENR before November 30, 2021, or as soon as applicable, or at time of hire.

Accommodations for this Policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An employee who requires accommodation should raise the issue with their supervisor. The accommodation will be assessed and the circumstances considered by the ENR Deputy Head.

Documentation Required for Medical Exemptions

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and Tłıcho Community Services Agency released an Approach to Requests for Exemption from COVID-19 guideline, which provides guidance to support NWT healthcare providers in a consistent and evidence-based approach to vaccine exemption requests.

ENR Employees requesting an accommodation due to a medical exemption to vaccination will be required to provide a letter to their supervisor from a physician or nurse practitioner or other certified proof of medical exemption from a physician or nurse practitioner to claim medical exemption status.

EMPLOYEE, and EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the Employee

- All Employees of ENR are expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to the worksite.
- Any Employee of ENR, regardless of vaccination status, who develops symptoms of COVID-19, or who has been in contact with household members who develop symptoms of COVID-19, must refrain from attending the workplace and should promptly advise their direct supervisor.
- All Employees of ENR are expected to follow all COVID-19 Chief Public Health Officer Public Health Orders.
- All Employees of ENR are responsible for obtaining copies of their vaccination records.
- All Employees of ENR must provide proof of full vaccination on or before November 30, 2021.
- Employees of ENR who will not provide proof of vaccination by November 30, 2021, should inform their direct supervisor at the earliest possible date so that arrangements can be made for provision of PPE and institution of a testing schedule, or so that other accommodations can be made, where applicable.
- Employees of ENR are responsible for complying with all PPE and testing protocols as directed.

Responsibilities of the Employer

- ENR is responsible for providing the Policy and the ENR Guidelines to all incumbents of all positions within ENR.
- ENR is responsible for ensuring that all required PPE is provided to Employees required to wear PPE while performing their duties.
- ENR will provide information about COVID-19 vaccination to all ENR Employees and ensure that unvaccinated employees who wish to receive COVID-19 vaccination are granted the opportunity to do so. Materials and information about COVID-19 vaccination can be found on the [GNWT's Response to COVID-19](#) website.
- ENR hiring managers will include details about the GNWT COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and the ENR Guidelines in all job postings.

- ENR will ensure that all ENR workplaces follow GNWT Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) standards for COVID-19 safety within the workplace.

LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER RELATED AUTHORITY

The Policy, GNWT Corporate Guidelines, and ENR Guidelines are issued under the authority of the Financial Management Board. The [Public Service Act](#) and [Regulations](#), and all relevant policies, and the terms and conditions of employment continue to apply.

The Policy, GNWT Corporate Guidelines, and ENR Guidelines are drafted and will be implemented in adherence to the *Access to Information Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Safety Act*, the *Human Rights Act*, and any other legislation, regulations, and policies referenced within the Policy, GNWT Corporate Guidelines, and ENR Guidelines or applicable to the Policy.

All ENR Employees will agree to abide by all government and department policies, collective agreements, procedures and legislation, including but not limited to the confidentiality of clients, department information and documentation.

Nothing in the ENR Guidelines shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Minister or Deputy Minister of ENR.