



Department of Lands COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines

PURPOSE

The Department of Lands' 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) by the Department of Lands. 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 management of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to protect employees and members of the public. Department of Lands COVID-19 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 Department of Lands and all persons engaged to provide services on behalf of the Department of Lands.

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*.

Contractors – means all persons engaged to provide services with or without remuneration on behalf of the GNWT.

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

GUIDELINES

General

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

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

Submitting Proof of Vaccination

Department of Lands 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 the 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.

Department of Lands 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](#) when the HRIS submission portal is live

Department of Lands 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 Department of Lands 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 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 the HRIS system.

The Employee's direct supervisor will not 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

Department of Lands Employee vaccination status information may only be accessed as necessary for implementation of the Policy.

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

Department of Lands Employees may access their own vaccination status information through HRIS.

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

Department of Lands Employees who do not provide proof of full vaccination by November 30, 2021, will be required to wear PPE designated by the Department of Lands in accordance with its Exposure Control Plan at all times in the workplace and to comply with all COVID-19 testing protocols as directed by the Department of Lands until they provide proof of vaccination.

Department of Lands employees who refuse to wear PPE or participate in testing protocols as directed by the Department of Lands will be required to take a leave without pay until they do so.

Personal Protective Equipment

Department of Lands Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination will be required to wear a GNWT-authorized face mask at all times while in the workplace, which includes personal enclosed office spaces, cubicles, and in all common areas. Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination may only eat or drink in their own cubicles or offices and while doing so, can temporarily remove their face masks. For clarity, an authorized face mask will also be required while completing their duties in the field or while on duty travel. These employees may also be asked at times to wear other PPE, as designated by the Department of Lands, 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.

Required PPE will be provided by the department. Employees who prefer to use their own face masks may do so providing the masks are [one-time use non-medical masks or masks consisting of at least three layers of cloth](#). Employees who choose to provide their own masks will not be reimbursed costs. Face shields, buffs, neck gaiters, scarfs, bandanas, or masks with exhaust valves are not acceptable for use under this Policy.

Providing proof of vaccination does not release Employees from use of PPE or adherence to COVID-19 testing required in their workplace, including as directed in Chief Public Health Officer orders or protocols contained within the Department of Lands' Exposure Control Plan.

COVID-19 Testing

Department of Lands Employees who do not provide proof of vaccination will require regular testing for COVID-19 in advance of attendance at a GNWT worksite. Testing protocols are in development and these Guidelines will be updated with further details about testing as soon as possible.

Duty Travel

Duty travel may require Department of Lands 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.

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

Department of Lands employees who have not provided proof of vaccination shall travel individually in a vehicle when attending Duty travel by ground.

Department of Lands Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination will be required to have their own accommodations while on Duty Travel.

If any of the above requirements cannot be met, a Department of Lands employee who has not provided proof of vaccination will be denied Duty Travel.

Work site-specific COVID-19 policies will apply to Department of Lands Employees.

Any discretionary Duty Travel for employees who have not provided proof of vaccination is subject to prior approval by the Deputy Minister.

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*.

Department of Lands 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 due to a medical or human rights exemption to COVID-19 vaccination must be made to the Department of Lands before November 30, 2021, or as soon as is practicable.

Documentation Required for Medical Exemptions

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and Tlicho 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.

Department of Lands 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 in order to claim medical exemption status.

EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the Employee

- All Employees of the Department of Lands are expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to the worksite.

- Any Employee of the Department of Lands, regardless of vaccination status, who develops symptoms of COVID-19 should refrain from attending at their workplace and should promptly advise their direct supervisor.
- All Employees of the Department of Lands are expected to follow all Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) and Public Health orders.
- All Employees of the Department of Lands are responsible for obtaining copies of their vaccination records.
- All Employees of the Department of Lands must provide proof of full vaccination on or before November 30, 2021.
- Employees of the Department of Lands 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 the Department of Lands are responsible for complying with all PPE and testing protocols as directed.

Responsibilities of the Employer

- The Department of Lands is responsible for providing the GNWT COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and the Department of Lands Guidelines to all incumbents of all positions within of the Department of Lands.
- The Department of Lands is responsible for ensuring that all required PPE under this Policy is provided to Employees required to wear PPE while performing their duties.
- The Department of Lands will provide information about COVID-19 vaccination to all Department of Lands 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.
- Department of Lands hiring managers will include details about the GNWT COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and the Department of Lands Guidelines in all job postings.
- The Department of Lands will ensure that all Department of Lands 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 Department of Lands 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 (Department of Lands 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 Department of Lands Guidelines or applicable to the Policy.

All Department of Lands 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.

APPENDIX A - Policy Roll-Out: Ensuring Maximum Vaccination

Education and Training for Unvaccinated Employees

The Department of Lands encourages all employees who are able to become vaccinated. Vaccine hesitancy can be the result of individuals being unaware of the benefits of vaccination, both for the Employee and societally, and of the safety of vaccination.

Department of Lands Employees who are not yet vaccinated are encouraged to review vaccine information and strongly consider the benefits of vaccination. These materials are available at the [GNWT's Response to COVID-19 webpage](#).

Department of Lands Employees are able to attend vaccination appointments during their scheduled working hours.

Health and Safety Considerations

Accommodations Procedures and Departmental Preparedness

The Department of Lands is prepared to review and if necessary provide accommodations for Employees who are unable to be vaccinated or undergo regular testing, either for medical reasons or based on protected grounds under the *Human Rights Act*.