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August 24, 2021

COVID-19 MANDATORY VACCINATION POLICY

AUTHORITY:

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, acting in its capacity as the governing body of the County of Contra Costa, the Crockett-Carquinez Fire Protection District, the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, and the In-Home Supportive Services Public Agency.

PURPOSE:

Contra Costa County has a duty to provide a safe and healthy workplace, consistent with COVID-19 public health guidance and legal requirements, to protect its employees and the public as services reopen and more employees return to workplaces. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and Contra Costa County's Health Officer, COVID-19 continues to pose a risk, especially to individuals who are not fully vaccinated. Therefore, certain safety measures are necessary to protect against COVID-19 cases and deaths.

On August 23, 2021, the Federal Food & Drug Administration (FDA), granted full approval to the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for people sixteen (16) and older.

Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent transmission and limit COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths. Unvaccinated employees, interns, and volunteers are at greater risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19 within the workplace and County facilities, as well as the public that utilizes County services and facilities.

To best protect its employees and others in County facilities and utilizing County services, all employees who are not subject to a more stringent vaccination mandate by the California Public Health Officer or Contra Costa County Health Officer, must, as a condition of employment:

- (1) No later than October 4, 2021, receive their final dose (either the second dose in a two shot series or the first shot in a single shot series) of a COVID-19 vaccine; and
- (2) provide proof of their vaccination status to the County no later than October 4, 2021.

POLICY:

Definition of “Employees”

For the purposes of this vaccine requirement only, the term “employees” includes all full, part-time, and as-needed employees of the County and Special Districts under the administration of the Board of Supervisors regardless of appointment type, as well as paid or unpaid volunteers, interns, contractors, and student workers.

VACCINATION REQUIREMENT:

Employees in Identified Healthcare Facilities

On August 5, 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued an Order mandating that all workers who provide services or work in identified health care facilities to be fully vaccinated by September 30, 2021. County employees who work in those identified healthcare facilities are *still expected to be fully vaccinated by that date*. Affected employees must receive their first shot in a single-shot series or their second shot in a two-shot series no later than September 30, 2021.

Exemptions to this order are only granted on the basis of a sincerely held religious belief or due to a qualifying medical reason. Employees granted a qualifying exemption must wear a surgical mask or higher-level respirator approved by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and must test twice weekly for those working in acute healthcare and long-term care settings, and once weekly for those working in other healthcare settings.

All other Employees

All other employees not covered under the CDPH Orders are expected to receive their final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by October 4, 2021.

Exemptions will be granted only on the basis of a sincerely-held religious belief or due to a qualifying medical condition or restriction.

EXEMPTIONS:

A medical or religious exemption from the vaccination requirements may only be granted if:

For Medical Reasons:

The employee must provide a written statement signed by their licensed physician, licensed nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional acting under the license of a physician stating that the individual qualifies for the exemption (but the statement should not describe the underlying medical condition or disability) and indicating the probable duration of the worker’s inability to receive the vaccine (or if the duration is unknown or permanent, so indicate).

For Religious Reasons:

The employee holds a sincere religious belief, practice, or observance that is contrary to the practice of vaccination, and the employee provides written documentation and information to support an exemption.

Requests for medical and religious exemptions will be processed by the employee's department personnel officer or by the County's Human Resources Department and maintained as confidential medical information. Requests for an exemption as a reasonable accommodation for a medical or religious reason will be determined on an individualized case-by-case basis.

Employees for whom a medical or religious exemption is granted must be tested for COVID-19 at least once a week (or more as required by the State's Public Health Order or the County Health Officer's Order, if applicable) and must wear a mask or other approved or required face covering at all times while working indoors with others. The County will continue to provide face coverings for employees.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT:

Employees must report their vaccination status to their department's personnel officer by October 4, 2021, which will be maintained in a confidential medical file. Access to employee's vaccination status is strictly limited only on a need-to-know basis, for the purposes of enforcing testing, masking, quarantining in the event of a close contact, and other safety requirements.

All employees must have received their final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine as a condition of employment by October 4, 2021, unless they have been approved for an exemption from the vaccination requirement as a reasonable accommodation for a medical condition or restriction or sincerely-held religious belief. Employees on an approved leave of absence as of October 4, 2021, must comply with the requirements of this Policy prior to returning to work. Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy will result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

CONFLICTS:

Where a conflict exists between this Policy and more permissive or restrictive standards pertaining to mandatory vaccinations or testing set forth in the law, or between this Policy and any other Health Order applicable to Employees, or between this Policy and any State Public Health Officer order or CDPH guidance pertaining to mandatory vaccinations or testing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the more restrictive provision controls.

This policy is subject to change based on future developments as well as guidance or orders from governmental authorities, including but not limited to the CDC, CDPH, and the Contra Costa Health Officer.