

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy FAQs

1. What is required under LABC's vaccination policy?

All employees must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 by January 10, 2022. Employees who do not provide proof of full vaccination or refuse to disclose their vaccination status by January 10, 2022 will be considered unvaccinated.

2. Why is LABC implementing this policy?

Vaccination is the safest, most effective measure to reduce the transmission of the virus in our workplaces and communities. For this reason, and to align with a recent decision of the BC Public Service, Legal Aid BC is requiring all staff to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 10, 2022. As more of you return to LABC offices, ensuring we are vaccinated provides one more layer of safety for all of us. It also shows our commitment to support the provincial effort and work together to get through the pandemic.

3. What does "fully vaccinated" mean? What about booster doses?

"Fully vaccinated" means a person has received all doses of a [Health Canada-approved COVID-19 vaccine series](#) as required by the Public Health Officer (PHO), and at least two weeks have passed following receipt of the final dose.

Since booster doses are not *required* by the PHO at this time, you do not need to have a booster dose to be considered "fully vaccinated". However, this could change as PHO guidance and requirements evolve.

4. Who does this policy apply to?

The policy applies to all LABC offices, employees, and contractors. It applies regardless of your current working arrangement (on site, working from home, or hybrid) or employment status (permanent, temporary, casual). It also applies to new employees.

The policy does not apply to contractors who are at an LABC office for a "transitory purpose", such as delivery or repair personnel, but they must continue to follow other public health measures while in LABC offices, such as wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing.

The policy does not apply to tariff lawyers, local agents, community partners, or clients.

5. How and when do I provide proof of vaccination?

Although the vaccination deadline is January 10, 2022, employees who are already fully vaccinated can show proof of vaccination starting December 6, 2021. You must show a digital or paper version of your BC Vaccine Card (or equivalent proof of vaccination from another province or country of a Health Canada-approved vaccine) to a member of the HR Team in-person or via a live videoconference. You do not need to show any other identification to prove your identity. Emailed, photocopied, or verbal verifications will not be accepted as proof of vaccination. HR will start contacting employees as of December 6, 2021 to schedule a time to show their vaccine card. HR will record your name and the date they viewed your proof of vaccination. Personal

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information on vaccination status will be treated with confidentiality and only shared with others where necessary to implement this policy.

Employees who are on short-term disability, long-term disability, or other approved leave and are unable to provide proof of vaccination by January 10, 2022, will be required to provide proof prior to their return to work.

For information on how to get your BC Vaccine Card, visit [Proof of vaccination and the BC Vaccine Card](#).

6. Does being fully vaccinated exempt me from wearing a mask and/or physical distancing while in LABC offices?

No. All employees and contractors must continue to follow all other [employee protocols](#), such as wearing a mask in common areas.

7. What will happen if I am not fully vaccinated by January 10, 2022?

Unvaccinated employees, except those who have requested and/or been granted a medical exemption or other accommodation, will be placed on leave without pay for up to three months. Employees who are not fully vaccinated after the three-month leave period may be terminated.

Employees who are placed on leave can use accrued vacation or banked overtime in lieu of leave without pay.

Contractors who fail to comply with this policy by January 10, 2022 will have their contract terminated.

For information on how to get your COVID-19 vaccination in B.C., visit the [provincial vaccine registration website](#).

8. What will happen to my benefits coverage and seniority if I am placed on unpaid leave?

Your employer-paid basic benefit coverage (e.g. extended health, dental, long-term disability, and employee basic life insurance) will continue to be provided for up to three months if you were previously eligible for benefits before the start of the leave period.

You will continue to have access to the LifeWorks Employee Assistance Program while on leave.

Your seniority will continue to accrue for one month of leave.

Contributions to your pension plan will be paused while you are on unpaid.

9. What if I believe that I cannot get vaccinated?

The grounds for requesting an exemption from this policy are limited. Beginning December 6, 2021, employees may request an exemption from the vaccination requirement due to a medical condition or [other protected ground under BC's Human Rights Code](#). LABC will not consider

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personal preference as a valid reason for an exemption.

You must send an email to the Manager, HR at Christal.Pendleton@legalaid.bc.ca to let them know that you intend to ask for an accommodation. In your email, specify upon what ground you are seeking an accommodation (e.g., “I am seeking an accommodation due to a medical condition”). The Manager, HR, will then contact you with further instructions.

For an accommodation due to a medical condition, LABC is contracting with a third-party adjudicator. You will need to provide supporting medical information from a qualified doctor to that provider and/or have your doctor complete a form.

LABC encourages employees with medical concerns to speak with their primary care physician and review the BC Center for Disease Control information about [medical conditions and COVID-19 vaccinations](#).

For an exemption on any other protected ground under the *BC Human Rights Code*, you must submit a request in writing that contains complete and accurate information describing your vaccination status and why you need an accommodation. For requests on religious grounds, you will need to complete a form and provide a letter of support from your faith leader.

Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and each case will be assessed on its own merits. The third-party adjudicator, or the Manager, HR, as applicable, can ask you for and collect additional information in order to assess the merits of your request and to establish reasonable accommodation.

If your request is not resolved by January 10, 2021, alternative work arrangements will be considered until a decision is made.

10. What will happen if my request is approved?

The outcome of accommodations depends on the specifics of each individual request. Employees with an approved medical or other human rights exemption must comply with the employer’s reasonably established accommodation.

11. What will happen if my request is denied?

You will be placed on unpaid leave as of January 10, 2022 or as of the date you receive your accommodation decision, whichever is later. You will remain on unpaid leave for up to three months or until you become fully vaccinated, whichever comes first.

If your request is denied, the standard remedies available to you under your collective agreement or terms of employment apply.

12. What about visitors to LABC offices?

Visitors, other than clients, who come to an LABC office to attend a meeting, training session, or other event with LABC employees, must be fully vaccinated.

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The LABC meeting organizer must ask the visitor(s) to complete a COVID-19 self-assessment according to the signage before entering the LABC office. Upon arrival, the meeting organizer must also confirm the visitor(s) vaccination status by viewing a paper or digital copy of their BC Vaccine Card (or equivalent). Do not ask visitors to email you a copy of their vaccine card ahead of time as this creates issues with records retention.

If the visitor(s) comes to LABC offices on a regular basis, you do not need to confirm their vaccination status at each subsequent visit, but they must complete a COVID-19 self-assessment each time.

13. How long will this policy be in place?

The policy will be reviewed and revised, as needed, as the COVID-19 situation and PHO guidance and directives change.

14. What supports are available if I want more information or advice about vaccination?

If you want more information about COVID-19 vaccination, or need other mental health supports, you can access:

- [BCCDC Vaccine Considerations](#)
- [First Nations Health Authority COVID-19 page](#)
- Employee Wellness Resources on the [LABC Courtyard](#), including *LABC's Employee and Family Assistance Program*