

St. Louis County Merit System Employee COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Effective Date: October 1, 2021 | Revised: November 16, 2021

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures pertaining to COVID-19 vaccination for St. Louis County Merit System employees. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), all COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized in the United States are effective against COVID-19, including serious outcomes of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. COVID-19 vaccination is a critical preventive measure to help end the COVID-19 pandemic. We strongly encourage all St. Louis County employees to be vaccinated.

This policy brings a balanced approach toward ensuring the safety and wellbeing of employees and the public we serve. While this policy does not require an employee to get the COVID-19 vaccination, it does require weekly testing of unvaccinated employees which will aid in our efforts to combat the virus by providing the data necessary to mitigate COVID-19 health risks. Together, a workforce of vaccinated employees and unvaccinated employees submitting to weekly testing, we increase the likelihood of keeping our workplace and community safe.

II. VACCINATION STATUS

- A. All St. Louis County Merit System employees will be required to submit an attestation regarding their vaccination status for the COVID-19 virus no later than October 6, 2021. Ongoing, employees will be required to update their attestation status within five (5) calendar days as their vaccination status changes, including booster vaccinations. New employees are required to submit an attestation no later than thirty (30) calendar days after their first date of employment.
- B. The attestation must be submitted by the employee at <https://stlouiscountymo.gov/emp-vax-portal/>.
- C. Fully vaccinated is defined as having received all doses, as recommended by the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), of a COVID-19 vaccine that is authorized or approved for use by the United States Food & Drug Administration (FDA).

III. VACCINATED EMPLOYEES

- A. If the employee indicates on the attestation that they are fully vaccinated by October 6, 2021 or by their first date of employment within the St. Louis County Merit System, whichever is later, the employee will be exempt from the testing and face covering provisions contained in this policy. Nothing in these provisions shall be construed as to exempt any fully vaccinated employee from face covering compliance with any ordinance adopted by the County Council or any Public Health Order issued by the Director of the Department of Public Health.
- B. The Civil Service Commission has the authority to audit attestations and request supportive documentation. The employee will be required to produce proof of vaccination by the deadline communicated to the individual employee as part of that audit.

IV. UNVACCINATED EMPLOYEES

- A. If the employee indicates on the attestation that they are not fully vaccinated, or fails to complete the attestation by October 6, 2021 or by their first date of employment within the St. Louis County Merit

System, whichever is later, the employee will be subject to the testing and face covering provisions contained herein until they are fully vaccinated and has submitted an attestation.

- B. If the employee chooses not to get vaccinated for reasons pertaining to medical conditions, religious beliefs, or as a matter of personal preference, the employee will be subject to the testing and face covering provisions contained herein.

V. TESTING PROVISIONS

- A. Employees who are not fully vaccinated on or after October 1, 2021, will be subject to weekly COVID-19 testing not to exceed seven (7) calendar days, with the initial test to be performed no later than October 6, 2021, until such time the employee is fully vaccinated and has submitted an updated attestation. New employees are subject to these testing provisions upon their first day of employment until such time the employee is fully vaccinated and has submitted an updated attestation. The method of testing can be arranged by the employee provided the COVID-19 test has been authorized or approved by the FDA. Testing options will be provided by the Department of Public Health for all employees.
- B. Employees not fully vaccinated shall report their weekly COVID-19 testing date and results of said test upon receipt of the test results at <https://stlouiscountymo.gov/emp-vax-portal/>.
- C. Submitting to weekly testing and reporting of testing results is the responsibility of the unvaccinated employee. If an employee is unable to adhere to their weekly testing schedule because they are on approved leave, said employee will arrange to reschedule or resume testing upon returning from leave as approved by the appointing authority.
- D. After an employee tests positive and 10 days have passed since symptoms first started (or from the testing date if asymptomatic), symptoms have improved, and no fever present for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication, a negative test is not required to return to the work setting. The employee will resume weekly testing upon their return. Thereafter, if subsequent tests come back positive within 90 calendar days of the initial positive test, the employee will not automatically serve any additional isolation periods unless so ordered by a medical professional or the DPH.
- E. Testing of employees through the Department of Public Health (DPH) may occur when an employee is on duty. An appointing authority may change an employee's work schedule to enable the employee to be tested during working hours. When testing through other means outside of the method provided by the DPH, employees will not be compensated unless the employee uses time off accruals (PTO, Comp Time, etc.) as approved by a supervisory authority.
- F. Nothing in these testing provisions shall be construed as authorizing employees to delay COVID-19 testing as recommended by current CDC guidelines or when an employee has been advised by a healthcare professional or public health official to be tested for COVID-19.

VI. FACE COVERING PROVISIONS

- A. Employees who are not fully vaccinated must wear a face covering when inside any County owned or operated building. Face covering is defined as a device, usually made of cloth, that covers the nose and mouth.

- B. Nothing in these face covering provisions shall be construed as to exempt any fully vaccinated employee from compliance with any ordinance adopted by the County Council, Public Health Order issued by the Director of the Department of Public Health, Rule adopted by the Civil Service Commission, or work rule or policy adopted by the employee's appointing authority providing for a mask requirement.

- C. Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring the following employees to wear face coverings:
 - 1. Any employee who is deaf or hard of hearing, or who is communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication;
 - 2. Any employee who is alone in a room, office, or other interior space within County owned or operated buildings when such space is not shared by other employees; and,
 - 3. Any employee who is actively consuming food or drink.

VII. ACCOMMODATIONS

An employee may submit a request for a medical or religious accommodation to the testing and face covering provisions of this policy by submitting a completed Medical Accommodation Request or Religious Accommodation Request form located at <https://stlouiscountymo.gov/emp-vax-portal/>. Medical and Religious Accommodation Request forms will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if the employee is eligible for accommodations. A designated representative from the Division of Personnel will engage in the interactive process with the employee to determine whether the Department or the County can reasonably accommodate the employee. Reasonable accommodations will depend on the nature of the medical or religious accommodation requested and the essential functions of the job under review. If an accommodation is granted the Division of Personnel will inform the employee's appointing authority.

VIII. COMPLIANCE REQUIRED

Providing false information or making false statements in connection with the attestation or testing provisions, or failure of an employee to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

VIII. SUNSET PROVISION

The provisions of this policy shall sunset at such time as St. Louis County as a geographical region has attained both a vaccination rate of 70% and a Moderate Transmission Level of SARS-CoV-2 as defined by the CDC.