

Vaccination Policy



Approved By: Timaru District Council
Date approved: xx December 2021
Keywords: Vaccination, Covid-19, Health and Safety, Employment Relations

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Timaru District Council (**the Council**) is responsible for and committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace by protecting the health and safety of our people, contractors, visitors and those affected by our work.
- 1.2. This Vaccination Policy (**Policy**) covers our approach to vaccinations where applicable and sets out our expectations of employees with respect to Covid-19 and vaccination. As such, we are working towards having a fully vaccinated workforce to ensure the safety of everyone in our organisation and our community.
- 1.3. Diseases are a risk in our workplace and we must take steps to minimise the risk of transmission of diseases. Regardless of which Covid-19 variant is dominant, vaccination (together with public health and individual measures) plays an important part in reducing the severity and spread of disease.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and visitors.

3. COVID-19 Protection Framework

- 3.1. New Zealand moved from an elimination and alert level system to a new Covid-19 protection framework at 11.59pm on 2 December 2021. The new system is being referred to as the "Traffic Light System" (**TLS**). The new system is intended to provide less disruption and less restrictions while ensuring the public health system is not overwhelmed. This decision forms part of a whole public health response based directives from the Ministry of Health to ensure we keep our communities safe.
- 3.2. There are three settings under the TLS: green, orange and red. Under the new system, if you are fully vaccinated, you can move freely across all settings – what varies is how large gatherings will be managed at the different settings. A summary of the settings is attached.
- 3.3. Covid-19 vaccination rates and community transmission will play a key role in determining whether our region will be at the green, orange or red setting.
- 3.4. The new system has introduced a framework which the Council can use to determine whether mandating vaccinations and requiring people to provide proof of vaccination by using My Vaccine Pass is required. Without the use of My Vaccine Pass, many of the Council facilities will be restricted or unable to operate in red or orange settings.

- 3.5. We anticipate that, given the restrictions on the Council if we do not use My Vaccine Pass, a number of our community and customers will use this framework to determine that vaccinations must be mandated for their workplace and will require our workers to provide proof of vaccination before being able to carry out work on their premises or on their behalf.
- 3.6. We also expect that with the change to a TLS we will experience greater rates of community transmission of Covid-19, impacting business continuity.
- 3.7. For the above reasons, the following Council premises will be operating as sites requiring vaccine passes in accordance with the COVID-19 Protection Framework:
- Caroline Bay Aquatics Centre (CBay);
 - Southern Trust Events Centre (STEC);
 - Museum;
 - Art Gallery;
 - District Pools (Geraldine, Temuka and Pleasant Point);
 - Timaru District Library;
 - Geraldine and Temuka Library and Service Centres;
 - Main Council Building;
 - Water Treatment at Aorangi Road and Claremont;
 - The Dog Pound; and
 - All Council events and meetings.
- 3.8. The Council has an expectation that all employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and visitors will comply with the TLS system, My Vaccine Pass requirements and our risk assessments.

4. Policy

Risk Assessment

- 4.1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (**HSWA**) requires us to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety, so far as reasonably practicable. We have carried out risk assessments for each type of role, to determine what measures can be put in place to minimise the risk of Covid-19 in the workplace.
- 4.2. The risk assessments for each type of role are **attached** to this Policy.
- 4.3. Subject to any changes to the risk assessment, and based on the outcome, we will put measures in place to eliminate or minimise the risk of infection for each role. Measures can include (but are not limited to):
- (a) Vaccinations;
 - (b) Distancing workspaces;
 - (c) Working from Home;
 - (d) Creating a roster for teams to work from home and in the office on a rotating basis;
 - (e) Implementing increased cleaning schedules;
 - (f) Improving ventilation or working outside; and
 - (g) Use of facemasks and other appropriate PPE.

Vaccinations

- 4.4. The Council is responsible for providing local services to the Timaru District. The nature of our work means that our employees are working across the District performing an expansive number of roles to meet the needs of the local community.

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- 4.5. In performing our work, many employees within the Council work in locations with common areas including our facilities, or where employees could have contact with customers or members of the public, and as such could be at risk of exposure to Covid-19 in a workplace context.
- 4.6. Given the above, we are working towards all roles being performed by people who are vaccinated against Covid-19. To achieve this we:
- (a) Require all existing employees to be vaccinated against Covid-19 in line with appropriate medical advice in accordance with our risk assessments and the Protection Framework; and
 - (b) Require all roles that become vacant after the implementation of this Policy to be performed by people who are vaccinated against Covid-19 in line with appropriate medical advice.
- 4.7. We believe that it is important that we are all playing a part in the efforts to combat Covid-19 and getting vaccinated against Covid-19 is one measure in this community response.
- 4.8. We recognise that some employees and applicants may be advised to not receive the vaccine based on official medical advice or that some individuals may choose to not be vaccinated due to their beliefs or circumstances.
- 4.9. If you are concerned about the safety or effectiveness of the vaccine, we encourage you to seek medical advice and will support you to do this where appropriate.
- 4.10. Only medical exemptions issued by the Ministry of Health will be accepted by Council.

Unvaccinated employees

- 4.11. If your role has been identified as requiring a vaccinated person to perform it, by either the Protection Framework, risk assessment or both, and you have either not disclosed your vaccination status or indicated you do not intend/or have chosen not to get vaccinated, we will need to consult with you about your ability to perform your role safely. This could include any reasonable alternative options or redeployment that may be available.

COVID-19 Tests

- 4.12. To reflect the increased likelihood of community transmission of Covid-19, we may request you to take a Covid-19 test if you are considered a close contact of an employee who has returned a positive Covid-19 test.
- 4.13. This is a reasonable request and is an additional measure to ensure our employees and those affected by our work, are safe and healthy.
- 4.14. If you do not agree to our request, this may amount to serious misconduct, on the basis that your refusal may impact on the health and safety of others and is a failure to comply with a reasonable instruction.
- 4.15. We may, after consultation with you, propose to suspend you without pay before we take any further disciplinary action.

Proof of Vaccination

- 4.16. Depending on the specific requirements of your role or location of work, we may request evidence that you have received the Covid-19 vaccine.

Our Obligations and Support

- 4.17. On the basis that we are requiring vaccination for all employees in accordance with the mandate and our risk assessments, we will enable all employees to attend vaccination appointments. In addition to this, we will consider any requests for further support to allow employees to be vaccinated.

Collection and Storage Vaccination Information

- 4.18. An individual's health information, including whether they have been vaccinated for Covid-19, is their personal information. Generally, workers do not need to share their vaccination status (or any person health information) with their employer. However, there is a public health exception in the Privacy Act 2000 that permits the collection, use and disclosure of personal information where it is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to public health or public safety.
- 4.19. The Council can ask if you have been vaccinated for Covid-19 if it can show it has a legitimate and lawful need to know the vaccination status of individuals.
- 4.20. If an individual covered by this policy chooses not to share their vaccination status with the Council, the Council must assume the individual is unvaccinated and will proceed to take steps on this basis.
- 4.21. Your vaccination information will be kept confidential.
- 4.22. All information collected, used and stored under this Policy will be handled in accordance with our relevant policies and the Privacy Act 2020.
- 4.23. This Policy is subject to change following any Ministry of Health (**MOH**) recommendations and guidelines.

New Employees

- 4.24. Any offers of employment made to new employees may be contingent on the applicant being fully vaccinated against Covid-19. This will occur if there is a legal requirement to have vaccinated workers for that position, or, if the Council can demonstrate that there is a legitimate health and safety requirement that the work being offered must only be carried out by a vaccinated worker. This will be determined by a risk assessment. In such cases, the nature of work sets the limitation on who can perform the work and should be advertised as such.
- 4.25. Where the Government has determined that a subset of workers must be vaccinated through the imposition of a Public Health Order, new employees for these roles will be required to provide evidence that they are vaccinated. Acceptable evidence will include:
 - (a) Vaccination Certificate / Vaccination Pass
 - (b) Vaccination Card
 - (c) Vaccination Confirmation Letter from the Ministry of Health
- 4.26. For a position that is not covered by a Health Order requiring vaccination, the Council can only make vaccination a requirement for new employees where there is a legitimate health and safety reason supported by the risk assessment carried out, identifying that a particular role requires vaccination.
- 4.27. Where there is a lawful reason for requiring that certain work be carried out by vaccinated workers, a hiring manager may request that all applicants for that role confirm their vaccination status as a pre-condition of employment. The application has a right to refuse disclosure, however, a hiring manager shall be entitled to treat such an application as if they were not vaccinated in determining their ability to perform the role.

Delegations, References and Revision History

Delegations

Identify here any delegations related to the policy for it to be operative or required as a result of the policy

Delegation	Delegations Register Reference
Appointment and Termination	6.2

References

Include here reference to any documents related to the policy (e.g. operating guidelines, procedures)

Title	Document Reference
Corporate Management Policies	Disciplinary Matters Health and Safety Manual

Revision History

Summary of the development and review of the policy

Revision	Owner	Date Approved	Approval By	Next Review	Doc Ref
1	Director of Engagement and Culture / Group Manager Commercial and Strategy	10 December 2021	Senior Leadership Team	3 months	1467421

New Zealand COVID-19 Protection Framework

Factors for considering a shift between levels: vaccination coverage; capacity of the health and disability system; testing, contact tracing and case management capacity; and the transmission of COVID-19 within the community, including its impact on key populations.

Localised lockdowns: will be used as part of the public health response in the new framework across all levels, and there may still be a need to use wider lockdowns (similar to the measures in Alert Level 3 or 4).

Vaccination certificates: Requiring vaccination certificates will be optional for many locations. There are some higher-risk settings where they will be a requirement in order to open to the public. Some places won't be able to introduce vaccination requirements, to ensure everyone can access basic services, including supermarkets and pharmacies.

<p>GREEN</p>	<p>COVID-19 across New Zealand, including sporadic imported cases.</p> <p>Limited community transmission.</p> <p>COVID-19 hospitalisations are at a manageable level.</p> <p>Whole of health system is ready to respond – primary care, public health, and hospitals.</p>	<p>General settings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record keeping/scanning required Face coverings mandatory on flights, encouraged indoors Public facilities – open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail – open Workplaces – open Education (schools, ECE, tertiary) – open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specified outdoor community events – allowed
	<p>No limits if vaccination certificates are used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality Gatherings (e.g. weddings, places of worship, marae) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events (indoor/outdoor) Close contact businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gyms 	
	<p>If vaccination certificates are not used, the following restrictions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality – up to 100 people, based on 1m distancing, seated and separated Gatherings (e.g. weddings, places of worship, marae) – up to 100 people, based on 1m distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events (indoor/outdoor) – up to 100 people based on 1m distancing, seated and separated Close contact businesses – face coverings for staff, 1m distancing between customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gyms – up to 100 people, based on 1m distancing 	
<p>ORANGE</p>	<p>Increasing community transmission with increasing pressure on health system.</p> <p>Whole of health system is focusing resources but can manage – primary care, public health, and hospitals.</p> <p>Increasing risk to at risk populations.</p>	<p>General settings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record keeping/scanning required Face coverings mandatory on flights, public transport, taxis, retail, public venues, encouraged elsewhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public facilities – open with capacity limits based on 1m distancing Retail – open with capacity limits based on 1m distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplaces – open Education – open with public health measures in place Specified outdoor community events – allowed
	<p>No limits if vaccination certificates are used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality Gatherings (e.g. weddings, places of worship, marae) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events (indoor/outdoor) Close contact businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gyms 	
	<p>If vaccination certificates are not used, the following restrictions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality – contactless only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gatherings (e.g. weddings, places of worship, marae) – up to 50 people, based on 1m distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close contact businesses, events (indoor/outdoor) and gyms are not able to operate 	
<p>RED</p>	<p>Action needed to protect health system – system facing unsustainable number of hospitalisations.</p> <p>Action needed to protect at-risk populations.</p>	<p>General settings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record keeping/scanning required Face coverings mandatory on flights, public transport, taxis, retail, public venues, recommended whenever leaving the house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public facilities – open with up to 100 people, based on 1m distancing Retail – open with capacity limits based on 1m distancing Workplaces – working from home encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education – schools and ECE open with public health measures and controls Specified outdoor community events – allowed with capacity limits
	<p>With vaccination certificates, the following restrictions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality – up to 100 people, based on 1m distancing, seated and separated Gatherings (e.g. weddings, places of worship, marae) – up to 100 people, based on 1m distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events (indoor/outdoor) – up to 100 people based on 1m distancing, seated and separated Close contact businesses – public health requirements in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gyms – up to 100 people, based on 1m distancing Tertiary education – vaccinations required for onsite delivery, with capacity based on 1m distancing 	
	<p>If vaccination certificates are not used, the following restrictions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality – contactless only Gatherings (e.g. weddings, places of worship, marae) – up to 10 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close contact businesses, events (indoor/outdoor) and gyms are not able to operate Tertiary education – distance learning only 		