



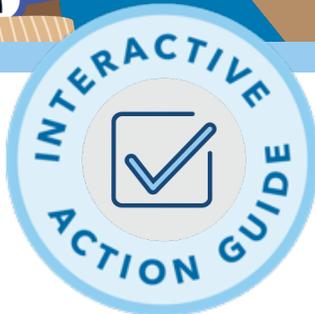
All for one.
One for all.

VACCINATE NOW



Workforce vaccine policy toolkit

A call to action for employers in the fight against COVID-19



Vaccine requirements are essential to ending this pandemic

COVID-19 has been controlling and taking away lives for too long. Vaccines are the only way to put a stop to it. Together, we must take bold action to help close the vaccination gap that's overwhelming American health care systems and threatening everyone's health, safety, and livelihood.

Kaiser Permanente has implemented a vaccine requirement policy across our organization to protect our employees, members, and communities — and now we're calling on all other business leaders to do the same.

“ We're in a race against time and must fast-track efforts to get more people vaccinated. Together, as business leaders, we can help put an end to this pandemic and regain freedom from COVID-19. The more vaccinated we are as a community, a nation, and a globe, the safer we will be from this dangerous virus.

History has shown us what we can accomplish when a nation comes together. This needs to be one of those times. ”

—**Greg A. Adams**
Chair and Chief Executive Officer
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals

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Why employers should require COVID-19 vaccination

Vaccines are the most effective protection against COVID-19. However, many Americans are still unvaccinated. Whether their hesitancy is due to personal ideology, a wait-and-see attitude, or misinformation, we must convince them to get vaccinated as fast as possible.

It's urgent that we take action now

- COVID-19 positivity rates and hospitalizations are rapidly increasing.¹
- The highly infectious COVID-19 delta variant is spreading at an alarming pace.²
- Unvaccinated patients represent the vast majority of COVID-19 hospital admissions.³
- The more people remain unvaccinated, the greater the chances that newer, more contagious — and deadly — variants could eventually undermine the effectiveness of the vaccines.⁴

Support and guidance from Kaiser Permanente

Kaiser Permanente now requires all employees and physicians to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 — except for those who qualify for medical or religious exemptions. We've also extended this requirement to every vendor, contingent worker, and supplier who accesses our facilities. Now we're sharing the insights and tools we used to implement a vaccine policy across our organization to help you successfully roll out one in yours.

1. "Trends in Number of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in the US Reported to CDC, by State/Territory," [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), accessed August 25, 2021. 2. "Delta Variant: What We Know About the Science," [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), accessed August 25, 2021. 3. "Unvaccinated COVID-19 Hospitalizations Cost the U.S. Health System Billions of Dollars," *Health System Tracker*, August 20, 2021. 4. "Unvaccinated Could Be Breeding Ground for New Variants, US Officials Fear," *The Guardian*, July 17, 2021.

How business leaders are taking a stand against COVID-19

As cases surge and the possibility of another lockdown looms, many companies are putting a stake in the ground by requiring vaccination and incentivizing unvaccinated employees to get the vaccine.



Retail

A national chain is letting employees get vaccinated while on the clock — along with up to 3 days paid leave for any reaction to the shot. The company is also offering a \$150 vaccination incentive to both current employees and new hires who were vaccinated before they started.¹



Entertainment

One media-streaming platform is requiring all employees and visitors to show proof of vaccination before entering its headquarters. The casts and crews of all U.S. productions also need to be vaccinated.²



Health care

A large drugstore chain that also provides health care services is requiring its nurses, pharmacists, and other workers who have contact with patients to provide proof of vaccination.³



Travel

One airline is charging employees on the company health plan \$200 a month if they fail to get vaccinated against COVID-19. It's also discontinuing pay protection for unvaccinated employees who contract the virus.⁴

1. "From Offices to Restaurants, Companies are Requiring Proof of Vaccination," CNN, August 4, 2021. 2. "All the Major Companies Requiring Vaccines for Workers," *Fortune*, August 23, 2021. 3. "From CVS to Goldman Sachs, FDA Move Prompts Vaccine Mandates," AP News, August 24, 2021. 4. "Delta Airlines is Going to Start Charging Unvaccinated Employees \$200 Per Month," NPR, August 25, 2021.

Preparing to roll out your vaccine policy

Legal considerations and handling exemptions

[New guidance](#) from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) confirms that employers can require COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of employment. However, they must also provide reasonable accommodations to employees who seek exemptions for medical or religious reasons, unless doing so would pose undue hardship on the employer. As you would with any important organizational change, consult with your legal counsel before rolling out your vaccine requirement policy.

Tips:

- Stay engaged with your HR department and legal counsel as you review requests for exemptions.
- Keep an eye out for form letters circulating online that are designed to look like legitimate claims of sincerely held religious beliefs.
- Consider requesting that exemptions be in the employee's own words.

1. "Data: Job Ads Requiring COVID-19 Vaccination Jumped 5,000% Since January," Ladders, August 13, 2021.

Job listings requiring COVID-19 vaccines are up 5,000%¹

When vaccines first became available, health care was the main sector requiring employee vaccinations. Now, the trend is surging across all industries — from small businesses to large corporations. This could encourage employees to think twice about what it means to remain unvaccinated.

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Preparing to roll out your vaccine policy (continued)

Employee and customer perceptions

Getting employees vaccinated is more than just the right thing to do — the health of your business depends on it. Of course, it’s possible that customers who oppose vaccines could disapprove. Employees who refuse to get vaccinated could quit or be terminated.

However, there’s a legitimate business case for having a vaccine policy in place.

The threat of another surge and subsequent shutdown poses far greater economic and employment consequences. And a fully vaccinated workforce is a potential business advantage — many consumers and job applicants are actively seeking out companies that are taking action to keep their employees and customers safe.

Most employees support vaccine requirements¹



1. “Workers Have Strong Views on Vaccine Mandates; More in Favor,” Gallup, August 18, 2021.

The top 3 ways to motivate unvaccinated employees¹

Unvaccinated employees say these incentives might convince them to get the vaccine.

- 1 **Cash incentives or bonuses**
- 2 **Time off to get the vaccine**
- 3 **Time off if they experience vaccine side effects**

Nearly
1 in 4
unvaccinated employees



would get the vaccine if their employer offered a cash incentive

1. "Workers Have Strong Views on Vaccine Mandates; More in Favor," Gallup, August 18, 2021.

Kaiser Permanente's vaccine requirement policy summary

Policy Statement

Kaiser Permanente is a leader in preventive care. In order to safeguard its members, workforce, and communities, Kaiser Permanente is implementing a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination program for its workforce, in compliance with, and subject to exceptions required by federal, state, and local law. Only verified members of the workforce will be treated as fully vaccinated for purposes of this policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission between Kaiser Permanente's workforce, our members, and others who may be present in our clinical and nonclinical work settings — and to establish a process to verify the vaccination or exemption status of our workforce.

Scope/Coverage

This policy applies to all physicians and employees in all work settings, including at Kaiser Permanente facilities, both owned and leased, and remote workplaces.

Provisions

Except where prohibited, Kaiser Permanente requires its physicians and employees, interns, students, and volunteers to be fully vaccinated. They must be fully vaccinated or meet a qualifying exemption by September 30, 2021.



Did you know?

In the first 6 weeks after Kaiser Permanente announced our vaccine policy, employee vaccination rates increased from 78% to nearly 90% — with physician vaccination rates up to 97% — and the numbers continue to grow.

Sample policy language about medical and religious exemptions

Medical exemptions

Employees must provide a written certification by a licensed, treating medical professional confirming one of the following:

- The employee cannot receive any COVID-19 vaccine due to contraindications recognized by the FDA or CDC.
- The employee has a medical or physical condition that prevents them from receiving any COVID-19 vaccine.

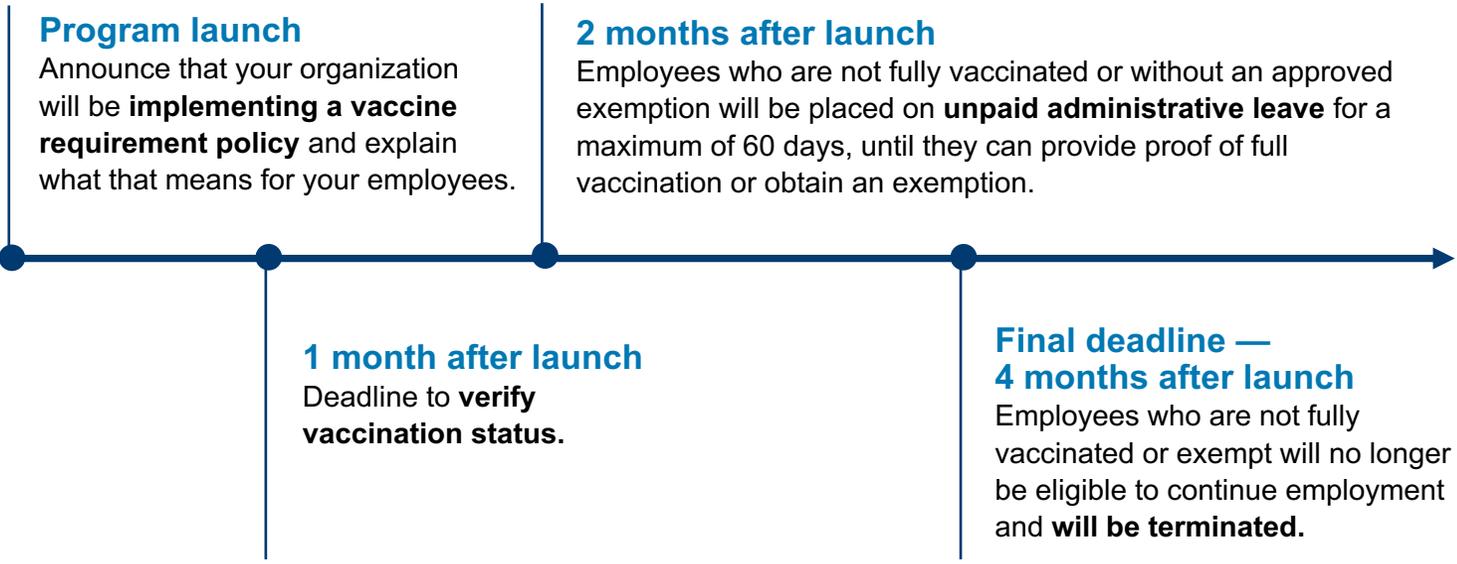
Religious exemptions

Employees must sign a COVID-19 vaccination exemption form stating under the penalty of perjury that they have a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance that prohibits them from receiving any COVID-19 vaccine.

Employee requests for religious exemption must be in their own words, and they will need to disclose the religion and specific teaching or doctrine that prevents them from receiving the vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccine policy rollout timeline

Change doesn't happen all at once. Just like any major organizational initiative, it's important to help guide your employees through this process. Kaiser Permanente used the timeline below for sharing information and setting expectations for key dates and milestones. The goal is to give employees plenty of time to comply — and make it clear what happens if they choose not to.



What does “fully vaccinated” mean?

People are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine

What if employees don't comply?

Be clear about the consequences of noncompliance in your policy:

- Unpaid administrative leave during a grace period
- Termination if they fail to get vaccinated or obtain an exemption

5 tips for sharing your vaccine policy with employees

- 1 Explain why you're requiring vaccinations.** People are always more willing to do things when they understand the reasons behind them. Reference any government mandates that may apply to your business.
- 2 Provide information about vaccine safety and effectiveness from reliable sources like the [CDC](#).**
- 3 Communicate clearly and frequently.** Send multiple notices about deadlines, requirements, and the consequences of noncompliance.
- 4 Offer support to employees with concerns.** Make sure leaders are available to discuss the policy and that everyone's voice is heard. Tip: Engage your employee assistance program to help with difficult or disruptive conversations.
- 5 Discuss reasonable accommodations for employees with medical or religious exemptions.** This should be done privately and confidentially.

Encouraging employee vaccinations



Communicate

- Survey employees to determine if they're willing to get vaccinated and identify barriers that can be addressed.
- Be sure to use a culturally and socially sensitive communication approach.
- Provide information about the vaccines to employees and their family members. Information [delivered by physicians](#) is especially compelling.



Accommodate

- Provide flex time or time off for employees to get vaccinations for themselves and their dependents, and to manage side effects. Eligible employers may qualify for a tax credit for providing paid time off.
- Assist employees in making appointments.
- Explore whether a [workplace vaccine clinic](#) would work for your business.



Collaborate

- Reach out to health plan and retail pharmacy partners to explore ways to increase vaccination rates.
- Connect with unions or industry partners such as Health Action Alliance to develop a plan to support employees in getting information about and access to the vaccine.

Examples of Evidence-Based Solutions to Increase Vaccine Confidence and Uptake

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Vaccinate with Confidence
Strategic Business Collaborations to Grow in Resilience

COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence: Rapid Community Assessment Tool

CDC tips:

[Examples of Evidence-Based Solutions to Increase Vaccine Confidence and Uptake](#)

Building confidence in vaccine safety and efficacy

Lead by example

- As a trusted source of information, show how you and other leaders in the workplace are participating.
- Share pictures and positive stories from those who have already received the vaccine and why they made this decision (focus on the positive impact to family and the safety of older family members).

Encourage confidence

- Use mentors and employee leaders to raise awareness.
- Develop caring and empathetic messaging campaigns that provide clear and simple information about how safe and effective the vaccine is. Use a [variety of communication tools](#) (social media, employee newsletters, printed materials, etc.) to share your messages.
- Prepare to address anti-vaccination perspectives and provide a forum where it's safe to talk about mistrust and fears. This will help address myths that may be circulating in social media outlets.

Anticipate cultural and social considerations

- Lead with empathy and remember that cultural experiences are diverse and unique.
- Make it possible for employees to easily access the vaccine by addressing time-off needs and transportation access.
- Provide a community forum to freely talk about concerns.
- Reference community leaders and medical personnel taking the vaccine to build confidence. When possible, include family members to raise awareness and increase understanding.
- Provide information in multiple languages on the vaccine and access to the vaccine if needed.
- Collaborate with public health officials, academics, unions, and health care associations in addition to community leaders.

COVID-19 vaccine information: Kaiser Permanente resources and tools



Kaiser Permanente's employer site

- How to encourage employees to get vaccinated
- How to build confidence in the vaccine
- Vaccine equity



Kaiser Permanente's member-facing site

- What your employees need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine
- Timely updates and instructions on how to make an appointment

More Kaiser Permanente resources:

Kaiser Permanente physician videos:

- “Real Talk About the COVID-19 Vaccines”
 - [English video](#)
 - [Spanish video](#)
- “COVID-19 Vaccine Safety, Effectiveness, Side Effects, and What to Expect” video
 - [English video](#)
 - [Spanish video](#)

COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness flyer

- [English flyer](#)
- [Spanish flyer](#)
- [Chinese flyer](#)
- [Vietnamese flyer](#)
- [Tagalog flyer](#)
- [Korean flyer](#)
- [Russian flyer](#)

COVID-19 vaccine overview flyer

- [English flyer](#)
- [Spanish flyer](#)
- [Chinese flyer](#)
- [Vietnamese flyer](#)
- [Tagalog flyer](#)
- [Korean flyer](#)
- [Russian flyer](#)

COVID-19 vaccine: know the facts flyer

- [English flyer](#)
- [Spanish flyer](#)

What to expect when you get your vaccine flyer

- [English flyer](#)
- [Spanish flyer](#)

[Vaccine Confidence Toolkit](#)

COVID-19 vaccine information: More resources and tools

CDC:

- [Understanding vaccine differences](#)
- [Benefits of getting the vaccine](#)
- [Myths and facts about COVID-19 vaccines](#)
- [V-safe after-vaccination health checker](#)

Other resources:

- [Preparing Your Company for COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [“Mandatory Employee Vaccines – Coming to A State Near You?”](#)
- [“As Breakthrough Cases Rise, So Do Vaccination Mandates”](#)
- [“How Vaccines Work” – video](#)
- [White House COVID-19 Action Plan](#)

Resources to help increase vaccine confidence among your employees:

- [Building Vaccine Confidence Through Community Engagement – PDF](#)
- [D.C. leaders, medical experts urge communities of color to get COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [“Dispelling Vaccine Misinformation and Myths in California’s Breadbasket”](#)
- [“COVID-19 Vaccine and the Black Community: A Tyler Perry Special” – video](#)



Thank you for taking action to help end COVID-19

Your decision to establish an employee vaccination policy will help protect the health of your workforce, your business, and our communities.

We're here to support you in this important effort. If you have any questions, please contact your Kaiser Permanente representative.