



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Last Review Date: June 2022

Next Review Date: June 2023

Approved by: Leadership Team July 2022

Owner: DCE Organisational Assurance and Communications

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) approach to worker vaccination requirements for COVID-19 and its variants as one of the controls that may reduce the risk COVID-19 poses to the health and safety of employees, clients, contractors and visitors.

Policy statement

MSD employees (existing and new) are encouraged, but not required, to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and its variants unless they are working in a workplace or role specified in Schedules 1 and 2 of this policy.

MSD will provide support to employees, as outlined below, to encourage and progress vaccination.

Any future need for a vaccination requirement for any employees would be informed by a risk assessment which would consider Public Health settings and how the COVID-19 environment impacts our people.

As this Policy has the potential to impact personally on each employee, we will consult again if any significant changes become necessary.

Scope

This Policy applies to all MSD employees (including those on secondment from other agencies, interns and volunteers), Tautiaki, contractors and visitors (excluding clients/client support people) entering MSD premises.

Policy context

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and associated regulations (HSWA), MSD has a duty to take all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or minimise risks to the health and safety of employees. MSD has identified COVID-19 as a critical risk.

As further required by the HSWA, MSD has undertaken regular risk assessments to identify the level of risk associated with COVID-19, including the risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 in the workplace and with members of the public we interact with. Based on these risk assessments, MSD has developed a set of controls designed to minimise the risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

COVID-19 also presents risks to business continuity. MSD provides critical services to large numbers of New Zealanders, many of whom are vulnerable. The consequences and potential adverse effects of COVID-19 infection and transmission within MSD would have a severe impact on the ability to provide these services.

While not all roles within MSD involve client interaction, all roles contribute to supporting the delivery of services to the New Zealand public and ensuring there is no undue disruption to the service MSD provides.

MSD's controls for the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic are delivered through a set of protocols. These guide MSD employees to effectively implement the risk controls and are regularly updated as the pandemic evolves, and as new risk assessments are completed. Informing the risk assessment and to determine our response, MSD's approach considers, in order:

- The Government's health settings and official Ministry of Health (MoH) advice
- MSD's operational context, its people and environment
- Business continuity factors.

The Government's key tool for protection against the risks posed by COVID-19 is vaccination. In line with the expectation of Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, MSD supports vaccination as a measure to protect the health and safety of all workers, and the health and safety of our clients, visitors to our workplace, consultants, contractors and other New Zealanders we work with.

Schedules to this Policy

The COVID-19 pandemic evolves quickly. This policy is designed to be responsive to future changes in the state of the pandemic, including changes in the Government's public health settings for the pandemic, new public health mandates, and to any reassessment of risks in the future.

This policy includes three schedules to be read as part of the policy:

- Schedule 1 lists workplaces where the risks of COVID-19 have been assessed as high, and where controls other than vaccination are considered insufficient to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
 - *Any person* (including new staff, and staff transferring or seconded from another agency) working in a workplace listed in Schedule 1 must be able to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 and agree to MSD recording their vaccination status.
- Schedule 2 lists work roles where the risks of COVID-19 have been assessed as high, and where controls other than vaccination are considered insufficient to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. This includes complying with any situation covered by a Government legislated vaccination mandate.
 - *Any person* (including new staff, and staff transferring or seconded from another agency) working in a role listed in Schedule 2 of this policy must be able to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 and agree to MSD recording their vaccination status.
- Schedule 3 describes the employment processes affecting staff who are required by this policy to provide proof of vaccination and are unable to do so.

Where changes are made to Schedules 1 or 2 (eg following a change in the Government's public health settings, a new public health mandate, and/or a reassessment of risks), employees in a workplace or role that is added to either schedule shall have a defined period of time (dependent on the official timeframe required between doses) to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19. After that time, the procedures in Schedule 3 will apply.

Changes to protocols

In addition to vaccination, MSD's COVID-19 protocols include a range of other controls which work together to reduce the risks of COVID-19. These may include mask wearing, physical distancing, limitations on gatherings, and other practices that may be recommended by the Ministry of Health.

MSD will undertake regular reassessment of the risks of COVID-19 and may make changes to the protocols as a result of a risk assessment. All employees are required to follow the protocols in place, at any time.

Supporting employees to be vaccinated

As required by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission this policy includes steps to educate and encourage employees on the value of vaccination. MSD will:

- support all staff to be fully vaccinated (and remain vaccinated), by providing paid special leave during work time to receive a vaccination and/or booster and to recover from any short-term effects of vaccination.
- assist employees in their decision making about the COVID-19 vaccination, with information including a dedicated Doogee page with links to independent and official advice and contacts for people who wish to discuss any issues with vaccination hesitancy.
- address vaccine disinformation, by identifying it as such and taking prompt action to correct and/or remove it where it arises.

Ministry of Health exemptions

Should future vaccination requirements be introduced, exemptions will only be available for people who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons and have an MOH exemption. Where an employee does not currently have an MOH exemption, we will encourage the employee to follow the process for seeking one.

Contractors

Tautiaki attached to any workplace on Schedule 1 must be able to show proof of vaccination.

Other commercial contractors, suppliers and landlords are presumed to have completed their own risk assessments and to have implemented their own policies. MSD's expectation is that contractors or suppliers coming onto MSD premises should be able to show proof of vaccination before entering should any risk assessment or future settings indicate the need to do so.

Should future vaccination requirements be introduced, and where a contractor or supplier is not vaccinated or is not able to provide a vaccinated person to carry out the work, a joint risk assessment will be carried out with the manager of the site and alternative controls will be agreed.

Clients

Under section 31(2) of the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Protection Framework) Order 2021, MSD cannot deny entry to people seeking to access MSD services, and any family members or support people accompanying them, based on vaccination grounds.

Responsibilities

Person/Party	Responsibilities
Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Decision makers on the Policy and Officers under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.
Deputy Chief Executives (DCEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourage and support employees to get vaccinated
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourage and support employees to get vaccinated
All MSD employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Comply with all MSD COVID protocols

Definitions

Word/phrase	Definition
Proof of vaccination	An official Government record of vaccination
Fully vaccinated	A completed course of an approved vaccine that is listed in Schedule 3 of the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021, including any booster shot(s) recommended by MOH to remain effective

Related policies

Word/phrase	Definition
COVID -19 Leave guidance	Outlining leave provisions that apply in different scenarios (requires updating to incorporate Traffic Light framework as well as changes reflected in updated Te Kawa Mataaho (Public Service Commission) Guidance)
Reasonable Accommodation	Consideration of what adjustments are required to enable continuation of work
Recruitment policy/guide	Outlining requirement for new recruits (requires updating to reflect vaccination requirements)

Schedules

- **Schedule 1:** List of workplaces where proof of vaccination is required
- **Schedule 2:** List of roles where proof of vaccination is required
(currently this may apply to some work where MSD employees work in Corrections prisons and where health services are provided to members of the public. An individual assessment of the work being carried out will need to be undertaken to assess whether the Public Health Response (Vaccination Order) applies).
- **Schedule 3:** Employment process to be followed where an employee required to be able to show proof of vaccination is unable to do so

Schedule 1

Workplaces where proof of vaccination is required

Schedule 1 lists workplaces where the risks of COVID-19 have been assessed as high, and where controls other than vaccination are considered insufficient to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Any person (including new staff, and staff transferring or seconded from another agency) working in a workplace listed in Schedule 1 must be able to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 and agree to MSD recording their vaccination status.

<i>Workplace</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Effective date</i>

Schedule 2

Roles where proof of vaccination is required

Schedule 2 lists roles where the risks of COVID-19 have been assessed as high, and where controls other than vaccination are considered insufficient to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. This includes complying with any situation covered by a Government legislated vaccination mandate.

An individual assessment of the work being carried out may need to be undertaken to assess whether the Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 (Vaccinations Order) or other Government vaccination mandate applies.

Any person (including new staff, and staff transferring or seconded from another agency) working in a role listed in Schedule 2 of this policy must be able to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 and agree to MSD recording their vaccination status.

Role	Notes	Effective date
<i>Any work covered by a Public Health Response Order involving being within 2 metres or less of a health practitioner or member of the public for 15 minutes or more</i>	<i>Where MSD employees work in a healthcare facility providing services where that work is covered by a Public Health Response Order.</i> <i>Worker must be vaccinated and have a booster.</i>	<i>1 September 2022</i>

Schedule 3

Employment process where an employee required to show proof of vaccination is unable to do so

There is no requirement for employees to be vaccinated from 1 September 2022 therefore an employment process is not required.

Should vaccination be required under future changes to Schedules 1 or 2, employment processes will be confirmed.