

POLICY NO.: G.G 6.17
SECTION: GENERAL GOVERNMENT - HUMAN RESOURCES
TITLE: COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY
ADOPTION DATE: NOVEMBER 15, 2021
REVISION DATE: JANUARY 24, 2022

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Municipality of Kincardine values the health and safety of every individual, and is committed to building, and maintaining, a safe and healthy work environment. The Municipality of Kincardine is committed to taking every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the health and safety of workers from the hazard of COVID-19.

Vaccination is a key element in the protection of employees against the hazard of COVID-19. This policy is designed to encourage and support COVID-19 vaccination and to maximize COVID-19 vaccination rates among employees as one of the critical control measures for the hazard of COVID-19.

BACKGROUND:

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic virus. Globally and within Ontario, variants of the virus have circulated with increased transmissibility and disease severity compared with previous COVID-19 virus strains.

Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) is an acute respiratory illness which may be characterized by fever, cough, shortness of breath and several other symptoms. Asymptomatic infection is also possible.

Vaccinations reduce the chance that a person will become severely ill if they contract COVID-19. Workplace control measures reduce the possibility of being exposed to the virus in the workplace. COVID-19 vaccines do not replace workplace controls but can be of assistance in reducing transmission and severe outcomes. The Municipality of Kincardine continues to have a variety of COVID-19 protocols in place to address related public health measures during the pandemic.

Regardless of which SARS-CoV-2 variant is predominate in the area, vaccination, in combination with public health and workplace controls, continue to work to reduce disease spread and severe outcomes. Evidence continues to demonstrate that a complete series of Health Canada-approved COVID-19 vaccines provide substantial protection.

PURPOSE & SCOPE:

The Municipality of Kincardine values the health and safety of every individual, and is committed to building, and maintaining, a safe and healthy work environment. Vaccination against COVID-19 is one of the best ways to protect workers who work in locations with common areas or where workers can have close contact with other workers or members of the public.

The purpose of this policy is to outline organizational expectations with regards to COVID-19 vaccination for employees, students, contract employees, volunteer firefighters, and members of Council (“Employees”). The Municipality of Kincardine has adopted this policy to increase the protection and safety of our employees by stressing the importance of vaccination in order to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 within the workplace consistent with our obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

GENERAL:

Employee Requirements

The Municipality of Kincardine strongly encourages that all employees who are eligible become fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as a measure to protect their health and the health of the community.

It is important that Employees make an informed decision about whether to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. In order to ensure that all individuals subject to this policy have received adequate education about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines, employees must complete one of the following:

1. Provide Proof of Full Vaccination
2. Provide Proof of Exemption from Vaccine - *Medical or Creed/Religion*
3. Complete a Vaccine Education Declaration

New employees will be subject to this policy as a condition of employment with the Municipality of Kincardine.

Support for Vaccinations

The Municipality of Kincardine encourages Employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccination and will provide the following supports to the extent possible:

- Assist Employees by providing information on COVID-19 vaccination and sites where COVID-19 vaccinations may be received;
- Allow reasonable time off requests if needed for Employees to access vaccination during work hours with no loss of wages (if applicable)

Workplace Prevention Measures

All Employees must continue to adhere to the established COVID-19 prevention procedures irrespective of vaccination status. This includes complying with prevention practices, such as daily active screening for symptoms, hand hygiene and sanitization of equipment, wearing a mask and other personal protective equipment, and physical distancing.

Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy or by providing false information about vaccination status will be considered misconduct. Non-compliance with this policy could result in discipline action up to and including termination of employment.

Collection of Information & Privacy

All information gathered as part of the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy will be handled confidentially and will be safeguarded for the purposes outlined in the policy.

All information, including personal health information, will be treated in compliance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA) and the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* (PHIPA).

Acknowledgements & Review

The Municipality of Kincardine acknowledges that this policy will be applied in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and there may be amendments to the policy as a result of the changing status of the pandemic or legislative requirements. Any changes will be communicated to all employees. There will be a formal review of the policy 90 days after implementation to ensure relevancy and application.