

Workplace Covid-19 and Vaccination Policy



Section 09 of Tłıchq Government Administrative Policy and Procedures

1. Definitions

- 1.1. COVID-19 – Novel corona virus, including variants such as the Delta Variant.
- 1.2. Rapid Test – Rapid Antigen Test used as a screening tool – may identify pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic cases of COVID-19, people who don't know they are infected, so they can be isolated earlier to stop the spread.

2. Authority and Application

- 2.1. This policy is made under the authority of the Chiefs' Executive Council and is a part of the Tłıchq Government's (the "Government") ongoing obligation to provide a safe workplace for all employees, contractors, citizens, and visitors. This is compliant with guidelines for workplace safety recommended by the Workers' Safety Compensation Commission of the NWT & Nunavut. This policy applies to all Tłıchq Government staff and to contractors providing specific in-person services on behalf of the Tłıchq Government or a Community Presence Office. This policy also applies to participants in Government-sponsored in person training and on the land programs.
- 2.2. For the purpose of this policy only, reference to "employees" shall also be read to include contractors, training and on the land program participants.

3. Background

- 3.1. Full vaccination has been shown to be highly effective in reducing COVID-19 virus transmission and protecting vaccinated individuals from severe consequences of COVID-19 and COVID-19 variants.
- 3.2. Given the continuing spread of COVID-19 in the NWT and particularly the Tłıchq Region, the limited availability of medical support, and the compelling data demonstrating a higher incidence of COVID-19 and more severe outcomes among unvaccinated persons, it is important for Tłıchq Government employees and contractors to be fully vaccinated in order to protect themselves against serious illness from COVID-19 as well as protect others including elders, colleagues, and visitors.

4. Purpose & Position

- 4.1. The health and safety of Tłıchq Government employees is a high priority. The Chiefs' Executive Council is committed to taking every reasonable precaution for the protection of employees and citizens from COVID-19. Vaccination is a key element in the protection of employees against COVID-19. This policy is designed to maximize COVID-19 vaccination rates among Government employees as one of the control measures for COVID-19. To this end, Government employees, contractors, and participants in person training and on the land programs are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

5. Requirements

- 5.1. All Tłıchq Government employees and contractors are required to be fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine series approved by Health Canada by **December 31st, 2021**. Vaccines available in the Tłıchq Region are a two-dose vaccine series. Employees must receive one dose of COVID-19 by **November 23, 2021** and two doses of COVID-19 vaccine by **December 31st, 2021**.
- 5.2. New Tłıchq Government employees or contractors are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of being hired by the Tłıchq Government in any capacity. This is a mandatory condition of employment and must be verified prior to hiring.
- 5.3. Applications for in person training and on the land programs must include proof of vaccination prior to confirmation of acceptance into the program.
- 5.4. The Tłıchq Government's Vaccination Policy supports employees in obtaining their COVID-19 vaccination. If operationally feasible and with the permission of their immediate supervisor, employees can be released on work time to be vaccinated. Employees may take up to one day of paid leave (without the requirement to use leave credits) to be vaccinated at the local health centre or the designated vaccination site of their choosing.
- 5.5. All employees are expected and required to continue to comply with applicable health and safety measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including but not limited to compliance with established workplace access controls like health screening, wearing a mask or face covering, using provided PPE, maintaining appropriate physical distancing, and self-monitoring of potential COVID-19 symptoms when at work or otherwise engaged in work related activities.
- 5.6. Employees who remain unvaccinated may contact Human Resources to apply for an accommodation, which is only available on medical grounds or on grounds protected by the Human Rights Act NWT and with proper supporting documentation. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If an accommodation is approved, that employee may be required to take additional infection and prevention control measures including daily screening, providing proof of a negative COVID-19 test (Rapid test) as well as self-isolate (without pay) if exposed to COVID-19. Accommodations are anticipated to be rare.
- 5.7. All accommodation requests require written proof of the need for accommodation. In the case of a request for a medical accommodation, the employee must submit medical documentation from a physician or nurse practitioner, and identify whether the medical reason is permanent or time limited. If the accommodation request seeks a religious exemption, the employee must provide proof that their religious doctrine clearly states that a vaccination for COVID-19 is prohibited.

6. PROCESS - Vaccination Requirement

Proof of Vaccination

- 6.1. The Tłıchq Government requires proof of vaccination from all employees. Proof means documentation verifying receipt of a vaccination series approved by Health Canada. Employees must disclose their vaccination status to the Human Resource Manager in accordance with the established process by no later than December 31st, 2021.

- 6.2. Employees who by December 31st, 2021 disclose that they have not received the COVID-19 vaccine, or who have not disclosed their vaccination status, are required to attend mandatory education on the benefits of vaccination, as well as training on their obligations under this policy specific to Vaccination Requirements (above).
- 6.3. Employees will be required to update their vaccination status as they obtain each dose of the vaccine and by the dates set out in this policy.
- 6.4. Contractors must provide proof of vaccination status prior to any new contracts being signed with Tłıchq Government.
- 6.5. Existing contractors must provide vaccination status by December 31st, 2021 or have their contracts terminated.

Documentation & Privacy

- 6.6. The Human Resource Department will maintain vaccination disclosure information including documentation verifying receipt of a vaccination series from a nurse practitioner or a physician in accordance with privacy legislation and Tłıchq Government Policy 6.13 Personnel Files.
- 6.7. Employees may be required to disclose their vaccination status by public health order or by law or to otherwise comply with this policy, including but not limited to, situations where employees are directed to stay home because of the results of the daily screening tool, or in order to comply with the clearance criteria to return to work after experiencing symptoms, having a COVID-19 exposure, or after travel.
- 6.8. The Human Resource Department will maintain vaccination disclosure information for training applicants/participants in a confidential training file under the same standards as Policy 6.13 Personnel Files requires.

7. Ongoing Monitoring and Assessment of COVID-19 Workplace Safety Measures

- 7.1. The Tłıchq Government will continue to closely monitor its COVID-19 risk mitigation strategy and the evolving public health information and context to ensure that it continues to optimally protect the health and safety of employees in the workplace and the Tłıchq citizens that they serve.
- 7.2. The Government, in consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer, will continue to assess other available workplace risk mitigation measures, including requiring proof of a negative COVID-19 test to return to work after travel, a mandatory quarantine, or after experiencing mild symptoms related to COVID-19.
- 7.3. If it is determined that additional precautions are necessary, the Tłıchq Government may decide to deploy new measures (including at the individual level) to protect employees and the public from COVID-19.
- 7.4. The Tłıchq Government may amend this policy with little or no notice. All amendments will be communicated to impacted employees.

8. Consequences of Non-Compliance with Policy

- 8.1. Employees who do not comply with this policy by the dates outlined above will be placed on unpaid leave, and may be subject to further discipline up to and including dismissal.
- 8.2. Contractors that do not comply with this policy will not be hired or will have their contracts terminated.