

NTHSSA-WIDE POLICY	
Title: NTHSSA COVID-19 Vaccination for Workers	Policy Number: 29-22-V1
Applicable Domain: Epidemic/Pandemic	
Additional Domain(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legal• Administration and Leadership• Public Health Services• Infection Control• Human Resources• Risk and Compliance Services• Governance• Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)	
Effective Date:	Next Review Date:
Issuing Authority: NTHSSA CEO	Date Approved:
Accreditation Canada Applicable Standard: Accreditation Canada Infection Prevention and Control Standards 7.2, Accreditation Canada Leadership Standards 2.10	

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The NTHSSA is committed to promoting, protecting and providing for the health and wellbeing of the people of the Northwest Territories. This includes decreasing the risks of workers contracting and/or spreading vaccine preventable communicable diseases in NTHSSA workplaces, with particular focus on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NTHSSA supports its workers by complying with the Northwest Territories Safety Act (Safety Act) and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations and related legislative and regulatory requirements, through the NTHSSA Occupational Health and Safety Program and Internal Responsibility System.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) COVID-19 Vaccination Policy outlines vaccination and additional measures as a means of keeping workers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. This NTHSSA Policy provides additional clarity on how COVID-19 vaccination will be applied at NTHSSA workplaces.

PURPOSE/RATIONALE:

To ensure the NTHSSA takes practical and reasonable steps to provide a safe and healthy workplace as required by the Safety Act and OHS Regulations, through consideration of current immunization practices, and through recommendations of guiding and accreditation organizations, as well as recommendations of the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) of Northwest Territories.

For workers performing duties within NTHSSA (i.e. Long Term Care) facilities or providing services to vulnerable clients; additional COVID-19 testing may be required regardless of vaccination status in the event of increased alert levels due to large volumes of community spread. This policy sets a baseline for testing, and does not supersede additional requirements put in place by the Authorities COVID-19 Response Team (ACRT) or the NWT's OCPHO.

DEFINITIONS:

Client: Patients, clients, residents, other persons seeking / receiving services from the NTHSSA.

Contractors: All persons engaged to provide services with or without remuneration on behalf of the GNWT.

Full COVID-19 Vaccination: The completed regimen of necessary doses to achieve full vaccination as approved by Health Canada and/or the NWT's OCPHO. The vaccination is considered completed 14 days following the administration of the complete regimen of doses.

New Hire Worker(s): A worker new to the NTHSSA, including those on transfer from a GNWT department or other agency.

NTHSSA Worker / Worker: As defined by the Safety Act, includes any person, paid or unpaid, who provides services, works, volunteers, or trains in an NTHSSA setting. Includes, but is not limited to, employees, physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, personal support workers, midwives, social workers, counsellors, consultants, visiting specialists, locums, practicum placements, students and all other NTHSSA staff and employees (including management positions).

OCPHO: Office of the Chief Public Health Officer of the Northwest Territories.

Workplace: As defined by the Safety Act, includes any location or area where work is performed on behalf of NTHSSA, and includes, but is not limited to NTHSSA facilities, outdoor environments, private residences, public venues, fleet vehicles, and personal vehicles used for work purposes.

SCOPE/APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (including variants) that may affect NTHSSA workplaces (commonly known as COVID-19).

This policy applies to all workers, contractors and processes in all NTHSSA workplaces.

Where regulatory provisions, policy, guidelines or etc. are contradictory, the most protective approach may be employed as long as it is consistent with the requirements of the current Safety Act and OHS Regulations.

PROCEDURE:

1. The NTHSSA's Territorial OHS Unit creates and maintains a program to prevent worker exposure to and infection from communicable diseases as a component of the NTHSSA OHS Program.
2. The NTHSSA provides and / or ensures access to relevant vaccines for work-related vaccine-preventable diseases as identified by Public Health, the Health Professions' Immunization Schedule, and / or as directed by the OCPHO, free of charge to NTHSSA workers. This includes currently approved COVID-19 vaccines such as those produced by Moderna (Spikevax) and by Pfizer (Comirnaty) and additional vaccines that become available for use in the NWT.
 - a. The OHS Nurse, or designated individual (usually Public Health if no OHS Nurse is available), reports the information to the OCPHO as required by the Public Health Act Immunization Regulations when immunizations are provided.
3. New Workers will undergo a COVID-19 vaccine review as part of the hiring process.
 - a. As of the implementation date of this policy, all persons who have not yet been hired for work or received and accepted a job offer within the NTHSSA and are subsequently hired will be required to provide proof of vaccination and will be ineligible to undergo regular COVID-19 testing in lieu of being fully vaccinated. Candidates must provide proof they have met the vaccination requirements or provide a valid medical or Human Rights exemption to complete the hiring process. Persons with a valid exemption, as determined by the NWT's OCPHO, will be accommodated and provided COVID-19 testing during work hours at the expense of the NTHSSA.
4. Current workers: Where the required proof of vaccination is missing, current workers must provide the proof of vaccination to the OHS Unit in a timely manner.
 - a. Any worker found to have provided false information may face disciplinary action.

5. Contractors / student / practicum / placements: Educational institutions and contractors are responsible for providing evidence of their own process or policy that requires their staff or students who work or study within NTHSSA workplaces to meet the vaccination requirements outlined in this policy. Educational institutions and Contractors are responsible for how they gather and maintain vaccination records.
 - a. Guidance may be obtained from the NTHSSA Territorial OHS Unit.
 - b. NTHSSA Divisions, Branches, Units, etc. hiring/placing students / casual / volunteer workers are to comply with this policy to protect their workers, their coworkers, and NTHSSA clients.
6. Workers are responsible to maintain current COVID-19 vaccination status.
7. For current workers who do not have full COVID-19 vaccination:
 - a. Non-vaccinated/partially-vaccinated workers who have a valid medical reason or other protected grounds under the Human Rights Act (and can provide evidence of such according to the duty to accommodate process) for not being able to be fully vaccinated will be accommodated for their time during work hours to attend COVID-19 testing, as determined by the NTHSSA. The cost of this testing will be incurred by the NTHSSA.
 - b. Non-vaccinated/partially-vaccinated workers who do not have a valid medical reason or other protected grounds under the Human Rights Act for not being fully vaccinated will need to undergo COVID-19 testing on their own, unpaid time, as determined by the NTHSSA.
 - c. If the worker requires accommodation because they are medically unable to be tested for COVID-19, the worker may be reassigned or be excluded from specific work activities or the workplace based on the duty to accommodate process.
 - d. Workers who are non-vaccinated/partially-vaccinated and choose not to undergo testing where they do not have a valid medical reason or have not provided evidence of other protected grounds that would exempt them from testing under the Human Rights Act, will be put on leave without pay.
 - e. Workers who are non-vaccinated/partially vaccinated will be required to wear an employer provided medical mask at all times in the workplace, except when eating/drinking or when at their private workstation (as long as the workstation is separate from another worker/member of the public or has a barrier to provide a separate space). This will be in effect at all NTHSSA workplaces.
8. Designated regional contacts will receive a list of staff that are not in compliance with this policy from the NTHSSA's Territorial OHS Unit. This will allow them to take appropriate actions to maintain a safe and healthy workplace. The actions may include ensuring staff listed are appropriately scheduled, are regularly attending testing, and other steps as determined by the NTHSSA.
9. Personal information collected under this policy, including declaration, proof of vaccination, and any medical information provided will be stored in accordance

with standard OHS Unit practices, The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Health Information Act and the Safety Act. Such information and documents will be used only for the purposes set out herein, shared only on a need-to-know-basis, and stored securely within the worker's health record, which is maintained and only accessible by the NTHSSA's Territorial OHS Unit.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Audits of workers' vaccination files.
- Worker vaccination rates.
- Other metrics as requested.

CROSS-REFERENCES:

- Department of Health and Social Services, Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Interim Public Health Disease Management for the Northwest Territories (undated)
- NTHSSA Occupational Health and Safety Program.
- NWT *Infection Prevention and Control Manual 2012*.
 - Section 8 Occupational Health and Safety
 - Section 9 Reportable Diseases and Special Cases
 - Section 10 Outbreak Management
 - Appendix 6 Communicable Disease Reference Chart
- Northwest Territories Public Health Act 2016.
 - Schedule 2 Notifiable Immunizations
 - Schedule 3 Reportable Diseases
 - Schedule 4 Reportable Tests
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- NWT Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act Hospital and Healthcare Facility Standards Regulation 2016.
- NTHSSA Request for Accommodation. (under development)

ATTACHMENTS:

NA

REFERENCES:

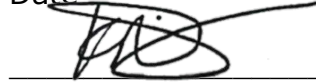
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 - NWT Infection Control Manual. (2012). <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/professionals/sites/default/files/infection-control-manual.pdf>
 - Canadian Immunisation Guide. (September 2016). Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunisation-guide-part-3-vaccination-specific-populations/page-11-immunisation-workers.html#p3c10a2>
 - Canadian TB Standards. (2013). Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/canadian-tuberculosis-standards-7th-edition/edition-11.html#s7-2>
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APPROVAL:

November 30, 2021

Date



Kim Riles
NTHSSA Chief Executive Officer

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