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New policy requires City staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19 or regularly tested

Guelph, Ont., August 27, 2021 – The City of Guelph is implementing a new COVID-19 vaccination policy for employees. All staff, not just paramedics, will be required to provide proof of their COVID-19 vaccination status or get tested for the virus on an ongoing basis. This policy also applies to members of Council, the Guelph Public Library and contractors and volunteers working for the City.

"I am one hundred percent in support of this," says Mayor Cam Guthrie. "We will continue to do whatever we can to keep everyone in our community safe and requiring the people who deliver public services to be vaccinated just makes sense."

Like vaccination plans from other municipalities and levels of government, any staff member who chooses not to receive the vaccine will need to complete training about the benefits and safety of vaccinations. If an employee still chooses not to get vaccinated, and cannot work from home, they'll need to get tested for COVID-19 on a regular basis.

Medical and religious exemptions

The City will exempt staff with medical, religious or other valid reasons related to the [Human Rights Code \(http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code\)](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code) from vaccination requirements. Where possible, the City will make work accommodations for employees falling into these groups.

Individuals with exemptions who need to work at a City facility will also need to get tested for COVID-19 on a regular basis.

"Vaccinations are the best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is very supportive of the City's employee vaccination policy," said Dr. Nicola Mercer, Chief Medical Officer of Health and CEO for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. "We hope to see many other organizations in Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph follow the example of the City of Guelph. Policies like this will be essential to drive further vaccination in our community and limit community spread this fall."

The City's policy comes into effect August 30, 2021. Staff will have until October 15, 2021 to show proof of their COVID-19 vaccination status or to advise the City of a medical or other valid exemption.

"Many of our office-based staff are still working from home, but others don't have that option because they're enforcing our bylaws, mowing fields and taking care of our parks or sorting our garbage," notes Scott Stewart, chief administrative officer for the City of Guelph. "Regardless of where folks are working, we do hope to bring people back together in office spaces, at Council meetings and for engagement, and whether that's sooner or later, we need to make sure we've done our part to keep our employees and our community safe."

Resources

[COVID-19 Vaccination Policy \(/wp-content/uploads/covid-19-vaccination-policy.pdf\)](/wp-content/uploads/covid-19-vaccination-policy.pdf)

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