
FW: New Vaccine Requirement

1 message

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Tue, Sep 28, 2021 at 12:44 PM

To: Richard Rhodes III <rcrhodes@uri.edu>, "dsteele, dsteele" <dsteele@apl.uconn.edu>

Cc: "Liu, Simon" <simon.liu@usda.gov>, "Young, Benjamin - OGC, Washington, DC" <Benjamin.Young@usda.gov>

Drs. Rhodes and Steele, I hope you are doing well. Below please find a copy of an email that has gone to our locations regarding the newest protocol for COVID-19 at USDA., for your situational awareness. All USDA employees are receiving a similar email.

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From: ARS-Administrator <SM.RS.ARS-Administra@usda.gov>**Sent:** Monday, September 27, 2021 1:14 PM**Cc:** ARS-Administrator <SM.RS.ARS-Administra@usda.gov>**Subject:** New Vaccine Requirement

Dear ARS Colleagues,

Earlier this month the White House announced a six-pronged [plan](#) to advance the fight against COVID. It included an [Executive Order](#) creating a vaccine mandate for federal employees. Specifically, the President has ordered all federal employees to be vaccinated against COVID. We realize this is a significant step, and understand it is critical to help contain the global pandemic, reduce infection rates and keep everyone safe. Please know that all decisions that are being made prioritize the health and wellness of employees, contractors, visitors, and the broader public. Moreover, the Administration is committed to letting the policy follow the science.

As a result of this new order, we are now required to collect proof of vaccination and more detailed information about each employee's vaccination status. [Here](#) is a link to the new survey. This is being sent to all USDA employees and everyone is **required** to complete it no later than **November 9, 2021**. Employees must provide one of the following as proof of vaccination:

- A copy of the record of immunization from a health care provider or pharmacy
- A copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card
- A copy of medical records documenting the vaccination
- A copy of immunization records from a public health or state immunization information system
- A copy of any other official documentation containing required data points that include: type of vaccine administered, date(s) of administration, and the name of the health care professional(s) or clinic site(s) administering the vaccine(s).

The Delta variant accounts for 99%+ of all new cases in the country, which is more infectious than earlier variants. Vaccinations have been shown to protect against severe illness brought on by Delta. To put things in perspective, there have been more than 680,000 deaths and over 42 million people impacted by COVID in the United States to date. This is more than the flu pandemic in 1918, making COVID the deadliest pandemic in our country's history. 100 years ago, we had very few public health tools to address the flu pandemic. Now, we have very effective vaccines to combat COVID, which are [safe](#) and have met rigorous scientific standards. We cannot overemphasize the importance of the vaccine for saving lives, especially since 95% of people hospitalized for COVID are not vaccinated.

Thank you to the tens of thousands of USDA employees who have already been fully vaccinated. For those of you who still need to be vaccinated, below are interim deadlines that will ensure you are two weeks from your last dose and thus fully vaccinated by the November 22nd deadline. You can visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find a COVID-19 vaccine near you and learn more about the benefits of vaccinations [here](#).

- **October 11:** First dose deadline (Moderna COVID-19 vaccine)
- **October 18:** First dose deadline (Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine)
- **November 8:** Second dose deadline (Moderna and Pfizer vaccine)
- **November 8:** First (only) dose deadline (Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine)
- **November 22:** Federal employees must be fully vaccinated

As appropriate, employees may request reasonable and religious accommodations and should do so by **October 18, 2021**. Please contact Mr. Joe McCleary (reeaccommodations@usda.gov) to submit reasonable and religious accommodations requests.

Additional information is available in the [FAQs](#), which are frequently updated, and our [Workplace Safety Plan](#). The ARS Axon [COVID-19 Information Page](#) has a wealth of information, including all communications from USDA and ARS on the pandemic, recordings from all webinars on this topic, and links to helpful external information.

If you are a bargaining unit employee and have questions regarding the content of this message and its potential impact on a current labor agreement, please contact your local union representative.

Also please accept this “save the date” for a special edition of the Inform & Engage webinar series to talk with external experts about the COVID-19 vaccines on October 6, 2021 at 3:00 PM eastern. We are fortunate to be joined by [Dr. Joshua Sharfstein](#) and [Dr. David Agus](#), two well-recognized experts from outside government, to discuss the vaccines with Dr. Jacobs-Young and respond to your questions. You will receive an Outlook appointment very soon and I hope you are able to join us.

Sincerely,

Simon Y. Liu

Associate Administrator, Research Operations

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