

September 29, 2021

City Team:

I am writing today on the important topic of vaccinations in the workplace. Long Beach has taken a multi-phased approach to vaccination. Two months ago, Long Beach was a leader in implementing a vaccine mandate, which included an option to test. We were one of the first agencies to implement this strategy, and chose this method so that we could quickly determine vaccination status and a starting point for testing, since there was not a fully-authorized vaccine at the time of the decision. We quickly initiated the meet and confer process with our employee groups, devised a testing process, and collected vaccination status.

Through the self-attestation process, we determined that our organization as a whole was 72 percent vaccinated, which essentially matched the vaccination rate in our community at the time. Since that time, we have implemented a system to document actual proof of vaccination, and the results are now available. Today, we are at 73 percent fully vaccinated, essentially remaining the same as before. However, during this same time the greater Long Beach community has continued to increase vaccination rates and has grown to 79.1 percent. Vaccination rates for our City departments vary widely by department, ranging from a low of 57 percent to a high of 95 percent. The specific breakdown by department is attached for your review.

COVID-19 is still very much a real and constant threat. We see new infections in our employees every week. We have experienced the heartache of losing employees to COVID-19. City operations are consistently impacted from employees out sick, on quarantine, or with family members impacted. The Delta Variant has proven to be even more transmissible than prior variants, infecting up to 7 people per positive COVID-19 case compared to about 2 people for prior variants.

While this third wave appears to currently be in decline, health experts fully expect that COVID-19 will again hit our workforce and community hard in the winter. We must be prepared to meet this challenge with proven mitigation efforts to combat COVID-19. The fact is that the vaccine, whichever one you choose for yourself, is the most effective way to prevent serious illness and death.

Having looked at all the facts, I am letting you know that the City of Long Beach will be moving ahead with the next phase (i.e., phase three) of our vaccination rollout. This next phase will be a requirement for all new and current employees to be vaccinated to further protect public health, protect our workforce, and protect those who we serve.

Some factors that went into this decision include:

- We have an obligation as public servants to keep the public safe, which we cannot do if we as an overall organization have a lower vaccination rate than our surrounding community.
- Our public safety departments, who have the most interaction with the community, especially in sensitive settings, are at 57 percent and 59 percent for Police and Fire, respectively, well below the community at 79.1 percent (Adults 18+).

- There are more and more instances where the lack of vaccination is impacting our ability to do our jobs, impacting the City's core mission of providing direct services to the community, and forcing employees to be absent from the workplace due to exposure or infection.
- COVID-19 continues to be the leading cause of death, especially for police officers nationwide.
- There is now a vaccine, Pfizer, that has been fully studied, reviewed, and approved for safe use by the FDA, which was not the case when we first implemented our Vaccine/Testing requirement.
- We are not alone in taking this step: several large cities including New York, San Diego, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Francisco have similar mandates, as does our nation's armed forces serving our country, health and education institutions, and several large private corporations including most of the major airlines.
- Having been infected with COVID-19 in the past does not offer the same protection as a vaccination - studies have shown that an unvaccinated person who previously had COVID-19 was twice as likely to get infected than a vaccinated person.
- Vaccination works: The rate of COVID-19 infections is 10.7 times higher for unvaccinated versus fully vaccinated and the rate of hospitalizations is nearly 9.7 times higher for those who are not fully vaccinated compared to fully vaccinated. Statewide, the death rate is 15 times higher among those who are not fully vaccinated. Less than 1 percent of people in Long Beach who have been fully vaccinated have been infected by the COVID-19 virus.
- The current model of allowing testing in lieu of vaccination is not a feasible model for the future. It costs the City \$110,000 per week, or \$5.7 million a year, at current rates to test non-vaccinated employees, and the City recently was informed that insurance will not cover that cost. This financial burden would be on top of the \$38 million structural deficit we will need to address next year.

I realize that this is a decision that some of you have very strong feelings about. I encourage you to research the safety of the vaccines themselves, as well as the rights employers have to require vaccines in the workplace. Please know that we also have many, many employees who support vaccination requirements as they expect the City to provide a safe workplace with measures to keep them and their families safe.

We will work on the specific details of this policy through the meet and confer process with our labor organizations over the coming weeks, to determine dates by which the workforce will be required to be fully vaccinated. Medical and religious exemptions will be allowed - the details of the level of accommodations that can be made will also be discussed and determined, and then communicated to all of you.

In the meantime, I strongly encourage you to take the next few weeks to get vaccinated and raise our vaccination rate as an organization to both protect ourselves, our co-workers, our families, and the public. I am hopeful that those who have been hesitant of the vaccine take the next few weeks while we work out the details of our policy to join the majority of our workforce who have already taken this important step and show that we, as an agency, can be in line with our community and lead as public servants, doing our part for the greater good and public health of the entire community. When the meet and confer is complete, we will be communicating additional details about the policy and specific implementation.



Tom Modica
City Manager

City of Long Beach Employee Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination Metrics

23 Dpts

Department	Attestation Form - Fully Vaccinated	Phase 2 (Proof) - Fully Vaccinated*	Total number of employees	Inactive (seasonal) employees	% of eligible employees fully vaccinated (Attestation Form)	% of total employees fully vaccinated (Proof)
Legislative	53	52	52	0	93%	100%
City Manager	57	61	63	0	95%	97%
City Clerk	16	16	17	0	94%	94%
City Auditor	13	13	14	0	93%	93%
City Prosecutor	36	39	43	0	95%	91%
Human Resources	42	43	48	0	88%	90%
Health and Human Services	420	478	537	0	85%	89%
City Attorney	56	59	67	0	88%	88%
Airport	77	79	91	0	87%	87%
Economic & Property	53	54	64	0	84%	84%
Financial Mgmt	188	199	238	0	81%	84%
Harbor	430	440	529	0	83%	83%
Libraries	151	139	168	0	85%	83%
Development Services	128	138	167	0	77%	83%
Technology & Innovation	135	131	161	0	84%	81%
Civil Service	12	12	15	0	80%	80%
Parks & Rec***	497	488	1031	411	74%	79%
Energy Resources (Gas & Oil)	139	144	205	0	69%	70%
Water	166	169	245	0	69%	69%
ECOC Comm Facility (DPEC)	55	56	82	0	69%	68%
Public Works	274	300	460	0	62%	65%
Fire*	453	413	695	0	66%	59%
Police**	589	612	1077	0	56%	57%
Total	4040	4135	6069	411	72%	73%

*Represents both civilian and sworn Fire employees. Sworn Fire employees are 60% vaccinated.

**Represents both civilian and sworn Police employees. Sworn Police employees are 51% vaccinated.

***411 seasonal (inactive) employees have been removed from the total number of employees column

Log updated 8:00AM 9/29/21