

11 November 2021

Restrictions in Queensland Update

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Workers in Healthcare

Queensland Health is continuing to actively respond to the declared public health emergency in relation to COVID-19.

From **7.30pm Wednesday 10 November 2021**, the [Workers in a healthcare setting \(COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements\) Direction](#) came into effect. The Direction gives effect to the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee's (AHPPC) recommendation for mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for all workers in healthcare settings as a condition of work. It also requires COVID-19 vaccination for workers in in-home aged care and disability support services.

All healthcare workers who provide, service or work in a healthcare setting (with limited exceptions) are required to have received the prescribed number of doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine by 15 December 2021, and to provide evidence of each dose to their employer and the healthcare setting as soon as practicable after receiving it.

A worker in healthcare is defined broadly, and includes both healthcare professionals and others providing administration, support and other services in a healthcare setting.

The Direction:

- Does not override existing mandatory vaccination requirements and exceptions for Queensland Health and Hospital and Health Service (HHS) employees in other public health directions and the Health Employment Directive 12/21 (the HED). A Queensland Health or HHS employee will still need to be vaccinated within the timeframes set out in the HED, and with the same arrangements for exceptions. Unvaccinated Queensland Health employees are not to work in roles that have direct patient contact.
- Does not override or extend the timeframes for the existing mandatory vaccination requirements and exceptions for workers in residential aged care facilities, where the requirements in the [Residential Aged Care Facilities Direction](#) apply to the person.
- Recognises the existing vaccination requirements and dates in current directions for students undertaking a placement in a [hospital](#), [residential aged care](#) facility or [shared disability accommodation service](#).
- Allows an unvaccinated worker in healthcare to enter and remain in a healthcare setting in their personal or private capacity – for example as a visitor, as a parent or guardian, or to receive care as a patient or client.
- Requires records to be retained in relation to vaccination status of workers, and to confirm that evidence has been sighted for medical contraindications and negative COVID-19 test results required by unvaccinated workers before each shift in a healthcare setting.

Exceptions to the vaccination requirements

Exceptions to the vaccination requirements are limited to the following:

- Medical contraindication – there are very limited medical contraindications. Where this applies the responsible person for the healthcare setting must assess the risks and determine whether the unvaccinated person may continue to work, using PPE and undertaking daily PCR testing before each shift.
- In response to an emergency – for example, an unvaccinated contractor may enter a private hospital to fix malfunctioning medical equipment required for critical patient care can enter but must use PPE, and must notify the healthcare setting of the emergency entry and their vaccination status
- To respond to a critical workforce shortage – unvaccinated employees may be permitted to work by the responsible person for the healthcare setting, based on a risk assessment, and for a short period (such as 3 months). This is to allow recruitment of vaccinated staff or to make alternative arrangements to respond to the critical workforce shortage. During this period, any unvaccinated staff are required to use PPE and provide a negative PCR test result before each work shift (daily).

More information about Queensland's Public Health Directions can be found on the [Queensland Health website](#).