

COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance for Employers

Peterborough Public Health recognizes and appreciates all the hard work that local businesses, workplaces, and organizations have put in to prevent COVID-19 in their workplace and our community. Going forward, vaccines will be our number one defence against COVID-19 in the workplace and community. Employers are well placed to support the COVID-19 vaccine effort at workplaces.

Why should employers promote the vaccine?

Consider promoting COVID-19 vaccination in your workplace to:

- Reduce costs by decreasing time lost from work due to illness and doctors' visits.
- Reduce costs and loss of business associated with complete or partial shutdowns due to COVID-19 outbreaks in the workplace.
- Reduce employee absences due to self-isolation requirements if an employee is in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19. Individuals who are fully vaccinated may not be required to self-isolate, provided they are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Increase productivity associated with reduced absences and illness.
- Improve morale of workforce.

In this guidance document, we provide basic information and resources on what you need to know about COVID-19 vaccines, how you can build confidence for the COVID-19 vaccine among your employees, and human resource policies that you can adopt to support your employees in getting the vaccine.

What do you need to know?

Before you engage with your employees on COVID-19 vaccines, make sure you have credible and relevant information. Here are some resources you can use to prepare:

- Learn about the [COVID-19 vaccines available. We also have webinars on the specific vaccines.](#)
- [Learn about vaccine safety.](#)
- Learn about who is [eligible for the vaccine](#) in Peterborough.
- Learn how to [book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment.](#)
- View the COVID-19 [vaccine FAQ.](#)
- Learn about [post-vaccination behaviour.](#)
- Explore the tools created by the [Ontario's Chamber of Commerce](#) to support business looking for vaccine information.

How can employers support vaccinations efforts in the workplace?

Employers can play a key role in building trust among employees for COVID-19 vaccines by:

Leading by example. Senior leadership roles can share their intent to get the vaccine, and their experience when they do get the vaccine. This can promote confidence in the vaccine at your workplace and lead to increased uptake.

Developing a clear communication strategy to promote the COVID-19 vaccine at your workplace. Provide clear, accurate, and complete information on COVID-19 vaccines to your employees to increase vaccine literacy. Before you start, have conversations with your employees to learn more about their feelings, doubts, and questions around the vaccines. There are some great strategies [here](#) that you can integrate into a staff

meeting. Use the information you gather from these conversations to help develop your communication strategy. Other topics that you can include are:

- How the vaccines work.
- The benefits of getting vaccinated and how the benefits outweigh the risks.
- Information on eligibility, and alerting employees when they are eligible.
- Information on how to book a vaccine appointment. Consider providing support to those who need it.
- Address any questions and concerns your employees have around the vaccine.

Use different forms of communication at your workplace, including newsletters, emails, organization portals, letters (see [letter template](#)), posters, flyers, and social media. Be aware of your workplace diversity, offer communications in different languages when appropriate.

Identifying vaccine champions. Encourage influential employees and leaders at your workplace to act as vaccine champions. These individuals can help promote vaccine literacy and confidence in many ways, including:

- Answering COVID-19 vaccine related questions.
- Preparing town hall meetings with a medical professional to answer employees' questions.
- Assisting employees with booking their vaccine appointments.

Adopting flexible human resource policies. Establish HR policies enabling employees to take 1-2 hours from work to get vaccinated. Be flexible with sick leave options for employees who may experience symptoms after vaccination. Ensure that you communicate these policies with your employees. If possible, consider providing transportation to local vaccine clinics.

Returning to work post vaccine

Due to eligibility and limited appointments, employees will be at different stages in the vaccine process (i.e. not vaccinated, vaccinated with one dose, fully vaccinated). To continue to protect your employees it will be important to continue following COVID-19 public health measures even after being vaccinated. This includes:

- Maintaining 2-metres of physical distance between employees.
- Wearing a mask or face covering.
- Self-isolating at home when sick.
- Practicing good hand hygiene
- Disinfecting high touch surfaces.
- Maintain safe lunch rooms.

Peterborough Public Health (PPH) has also [issued a Letter of Instruction](#) for all workplaces, ensuring that public health measures are followed and employers and employees are protected. In addition to physical distancing, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette – PPH now requires any employee who must come within two (2) metres / six (6) feet of any other person without a physical barrier between them, to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) including a medical grade mask and eye protection (specifically: goggles, a face shield, or well-fitted safety glasses), in order to maintain low risk exposures.

Please review the requirements needed for each workplace.

For more information on COVID-19 public health safety measures, visit peterboroughpublichealth.ca.

Resources:

- [COVID-19 vaccination plan](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine promotion toolkit](#)
- [What to expect when you get a COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Guidance for employers managing workers with symptoms within 48 hours of COVID-19 immunization](#)