

MUSC as a Federal Contractor: Vaccine Mandate

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **A federal judge recently placed a “stay” on the Biden administration order requiring all businesses with more than 100 employees to implement a vaccine mandate. How does this affect the MUSC vaccine mandate for “covered” employees under a federal contract?**

This recent “stay” by a federal judge does halt the vaccine mandate for all businesses over 100 employees but does not affect the executive order requiring all entities who accept federal contracts to implement a vaccine mandate for all “covered” employees. MUSC must proceed with our current plan to vaccinate employees “covered” under our federal contracts or risk losing millions of dollars in federal funds.

2. **What is a “covered employee” as defined by this federal order for vaccine mandates?**

- a) All university employees directly named on a federal contract, even if they work remotely.
- b) All university employees who in any way support a federal contract (legal team, business administrators, research administration team, etc.) even if they work remotely.
- c) All university employees interacting with people in #1 and #2 above including those working and/or meeting regularly (including teaching) in the same buildings.

3. **How will I know if I am a covered employee?**

You should already have been notified if you are a covered employee for the three contracts we have received that contain this new vaccine mandate clause. However, as we receive each new contract, new people will be notified that they are now considered covered and will be required to be vaccinated. You will be notified by your respective units.

If I am notified that I must be fully vaccinated by January 4...

4. **When do I need to get my vaccine?**

The answer depends on which vaccine you receive. Note that MUSC currently provides only the Pfizer vaccine.

- a. Pfizer vaccine - you must receive the first dose by November 30 and your second dose at least three weeks later (no later than December 28) to be considered fully vaccinated (two weeks after last dose) by January 4.

- b. Moderna vaccine - you must receive the first dose by November 23 and your second dose at least 4 weeks later (no later than December 28) to be considered fully vaccinated (two weeks after last dose) by January 4.
- c. J&J vaccine-this single dose must be administered before December 28 to be considered fully vaccinated prior to January 4.

For more information about obtaining the COVID-19 vaccine, including scheduling, locations and more, please visit:

<https://muschealth.org/get-vaccine>

5. What are the disciplinary actions I might face if I refuse to be vaccinated?

For staff, noncompliance with the mandate will be addressed as needed in accordance with MUSC's normal guidelines for disciplinary action, please check with your unit business manager or HR manager if you don't know what those are. **For students** who are employed by MUSC, please check with your supervisor of student affairs staff regarding potential consequences. **For faculty**, all potential disciplinary actions are listed in the faculty handbook. However, we truly hope this mandate does not result in any disciplinary actions or adverse consequences.

6. Will MUSC change its position on this vaccine mandate?

The only thing that will stop or put a hold on the MUSC vaccine mandate for covered employees under federal contracts is a federal judicial ruling to halt/stop. We simply can't afford to risk losing millions of dollars in federal support that pays salaries and supports our mission.

7. How will leaders know if their "covered" employees are vaccinated or if they have been approved for an exemption?

Employee health will be maintaining a database of all employees that will track vaccination/exemption status. The only reports leaders will receive will contain the name of the employee with a status of compliant or non-compliant. These reports will be distributed regularly once the database is set up. A status of compliant will be listed for all employees who are fully vaccinated or who have been approved for an exemption.

8. Which religions will be considered for approval for an exemption?

An employee may request a religious exemption only if they honestly believe that their personal religious beliefs prevent them from getting vaccinated. It would be impossible for us to list all religions this may include or to anticipate these requests. We anticipate that most of these requests will be approved.

9. If I have had COVID-19 in the past, do I qualify for a medical exemption?

Yes, with a letter from a medical provider and based on the premise that you likely have antibodies for COVID-19, you will be exempt.