

# **The Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii**

## **COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination and Testing Policy**

### **Introduction and Purpose**

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing threat of the virus and its variants to our community, and as part of our continued efforts to maintain a safe work and worship environment for employees, clergy and congregants, the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii (“the Diocese”) is implementing this mandatory COVID-19 vaccination and testing policy effective October 1, 2021. We believe that the COVID-19 vaccination currently is our best defense to the virus because it prevents serious illness and death, and the more people who are vaccinated the better we will be able to protect ourselves, each other, and our community. The Diocese fully intends this policy to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local law or guidance. We are monitoring guidance from all applicable public health authorities and reserve the right to modify this policy as we determine may be necessary or appropriate.

### **Coverage**

This policy applies to non-clergy employees and new hires of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii, including its churches and facilities. “New hire” means a non-clergy individual who is hired as an introductory employee to begin employment on or after October 1, 2021. All churches and facilities of the Diocese shall adopt this policy as a minimum policy; they may, however, adopt additional requirements as long as they comply with applicable laws. Also, vendors and contractors will ensure that their employees who perform their work at premises of the Diocese including its churches and facilities are in compliance with this policy. This policy does not apply to clergy or lay members volunteering in ministries of the Episcopal Church; a separate policy has been promulgated for them.

### **Policy**

Effective October 1, 2021, all non-clergy employees and new hires must be fully vaccinated by receiving an FDA-authorized and/or approved COVID-19 vaccination. “Fully-vaccinated” means 2 weeks after the second dose of a 2-dose vaccine or 2 weeks after a single dose vaccine.

Non-clergy employees who do not wish to get vaccinated will be required to undergo weekly COVID-19 testing that is approved by TECH and receive a negative result. Such employees are in compliance with this policy and do not need to request an exception. Limited exceptions to these requirements based on disability, religion or other protected category will be considered as required by applicable state and federal laws.

### **Procedures**

It is recommended that individuals consult with their healthcare provider regarding whether to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination. Although whether or not someone receives a vaccination may have work implications, the decision whether to be vaccinated, and which vaccine to receive, is

still a choice that an individual should make in consultation with their medical provider after reviewing all of the available information.

Individuals requesting an exception to the requirements of this policy must fully complete the exception request form. Such requests will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. The Diocese may require additional information or documentation to make its determination. Only fully completed exception request forms shall be considered by the Diocese.

Individuals who participate in the weekly COVID-19 testing alternative in lieu of vaccination shall sign and return a consent and authorization form to receive COVID-19 test(s) and to permit the testing lab, if applicable, to process and disclose COVID-19 test results to the Diocese. Employees or volunteers who are under the age of 16 must have their parents or guardians sign and return the parental consent and authorization form on behalf of such employee.

Please note all individuals covered by this policy still may be subjected to temperature checks and health screenings as part of the Diocese's safe work and worship environment efforts. The Diocese may collect various information about you, such as your name, whether you have a temperature greater than 100.4°F (or other applicable temperature), and your answers to certain health screening questions, including information about whether you have received and completed a COVID-19 vaccination, or the results of COVID-19 testing.

We will use the information received from any temperature checks, health screenings, vaccination information, and/or COVID-19 test results as necessary and appropriate to maintain the health and safety of employees, clergy and congregants on the premises of the Diocese, such as to make a determination about whether you may enter the premises and work on the day of the temperature check, health screening, and/or COVID-19 test and/or on subsequent days. All information will be kept confidential to the extent required by applicable state and federal laws. If you have an elevated temperature, provide certain answers to the health screening questions, or are unvaccinated and have a positive COVID-19 test, you must speak with the Diocesan operations manager or designee before you may enter the premises of the Diocese or perform work in any capacity on behalf of the Diocese. Please see the accompanying FAQs.

If you do not consent either to having your temperature checked, answering the health screening questions, or being tested for COVID-19 as required above if you are unvaccinated, you must speak with the Diocesan business manager or designee before you may enter any premises of the Diocese and/or work in any capacity on behalf of the Diocese. Please see the accompanying FAQs.

9/20/2021  
4825-2218-3925, v. 1

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**Frequently Asked Questions**

We have developed these FAQs so that covered individuals can be more informed about our COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Policy (“Policy”). We encourage you to review these FAQs and the additional documents and resources referenced in these FAQs.

**1. Is The Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii (“Diocese”) requiring that I be vaccinated for COVID-19?**

The Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii is committed to maintaining a safe work and worship environment for our employees, clergy, and congregants. Our current strategy includes screening, social distancing, contact tracing, and other measures. Beginning October 1, 2021, we are adding the requirement that all non-clergy employees and new hires must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 with an FDA-authorized or approved vaccination. Employees who are not fully vaccinated will be required to undergo weekly COVID-19 testing that is approved by the Diocese and receive a negative result.

**2. Who is subject to this policy?**

All non-clergy employees and new hires of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii. Clergy and non-employee lay members of the Episcopal Church are covered by a separate policy that mandates vaccination.

**3. Is the Diocese offering the vaccination?**

The Diocese is not offering the vaccination. However, the vaccination is readily available free-of-charge from multiple sources. If you have any trouble locating a vaccination source, please contact the Diocesan Support Center for assistance. You may also go to: <https://hawaiicovid19.com/vaccine-info/>

**4. If I am vaccinated, will I have to confirm that status with the Diocese?**

Yes. Vaccinated individuals will need to provide confirmation of their vaccination in the form, time, and manner reasonably requested by the Diocese. Such confirmation may require producing a vaccination card or documentation from your healthcare provider of the administration of the vaccination. In such case, you will be responsible for providing any required consents and/or authorizations to the provider to disclose the information necessary to confirm the employee’s vaccination. As with all identifiable employee medical information, we will safeguard information concerning COVID-19 vaccinations in accordance with applicable law. Employees who do not provide this confirmation will be subject to weekly COVID-19 testing under the policy.

**5. I understand that I may feel ill after getting vaccinated. Is that correct, and how will it affect my work schedule as an employee?**

According to the CDC, individuals may experience mild to moderate reactions to vaccinations that may cause individuals to feel ill for a few days after the vaccination.

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Therefore, we are attempting to plan for potential absences following vaccinations. Employees and clergy members may be eligible to take paid or unpaid time off for absences related to reactions where they feel ill after the vaccination under TECH policy or state/local laws. As soon as an employee or clergy member schedules a vaccination, please report the date of your vaccination to the Diocesan Support Center. To avoid unanticipated staffing shortfalls, we may explore the possibility of scheduling you to take time off on the day(s) immediately following your vaccination(s).

**6. What happens if I decide to remain unvaccinated?**

As a condition of continued employment, non-clergy employees who are unvaccinated and/or not fully vaccinated on or after October 1, 2021, will be subject to weekly COVID-19 testing and must show a negative test result for such testing. That is, beginning October 1, 2021, all non-clergy employees who are not fully vaccinated will be subject to weekly COVID-19 testing and must show a negative test result for such testing in order to continue to their employment with the Diocese, including its churches and facilities, and be permitted to enter any premises of the Diocese, including its churches and facilities, and/or perform duties and responsibilities on behalf of the Episcopal Church.

**7. If I remain unvaccinated, what type of COVID-19 tests will be administered?**

Depending on the circumstances, the weekly COVID-19 testing may involve different test methodologies for viral testing, depending on supply, time for processing, and other factors. COVID-19 testing generally does not include serological or antibody testing. Test specimens may be obtained using various specimen collection procedures such as:

- Nasopharyngeal swab
- Nasal swab
- Saliva swab

Currently, COVID-19 testing required under this policy will be conducted with tests that have received FDA Emergency Use Authorization. We encourage all individuals who are getting tested for COVID-19 to review the applicable FDA Fact Sheets for the particular test they are receiving. The FDA Fact Sheets include important information about the particular tests. You should ask the testing provider for a copy of the applicable Fact Sheet. You also may go to: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-legal-regulatory-and-policy-framework/emergency-use-authorization>. If you have any questions finding this information, please contact the Diocesan Support Center for assistance. The Diocese may allow the use of other tests and testing methods for the COVID-19 testing required under this policy, including those that have not received FDA Emergency Use Authorization.

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**8. What happens if an unvaccinated non-clergy employee refuses to be tested under the policy?**

An unvaccinated non-clergy who declines to comply with all testing protocols required by this policy, including but not limited to the completion and return of the applicable COVID-19 Testing Authorization Form or refusal to submit to weekly COVID-19 testing will be removed from the work schedule until he/she is fully vaccinated or weekly COVID-19 testing is completed and a negative test result is received. During this time, the employee may use available PTO, vacation, or other available qualifying paid time off, as applicable; however, use of sick time is not permitted for this purpose.

Employees who are medically unable to be tested or those with a religious objection to testing must seek an exception to the testing requirement by fully completing the exception request form. The Diocese will only consider exception requests from individuals who have fully completed the exception request form.

Employees who decline to cooperate with the testing protocols of this policy are prohibited from entering any premises of the Diocese and/or performing duties and responsibilities on behalf of the Episcopal Church and are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

**9. Am I allowed to work or resume my duties as an employee after I am tested and awaiting test results?**

In general, you may be permitted to work while you are awaiting COVID-19 test results as long as you remain asymptomatic and have not had close contact with a COVID positive individual. However, depending on the circumstances, employees may be required to remain away from premises of the Diocese or perform duties and responsibilities on behalf of the Episcopal Church until the COVID-19 test results are received and determined to be negative.

**10. What happens if my test is positive?**

Employees who receive a positive COVID-19 test will be removed from the work schedule and required to remain away from premises of the Diocese. They will remain out of work for a designated period and will be permitted to return to work in accordance with the needs of the Diocese, including its churches and premises, and applicable return to work procedures.

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**11. How will test results be communicated back to me and how long will it take?**

Except as otherwise authorized by you or applicable law, testing results typically will be communicated via a personal phone call to an employee if the results are positive. The number used will be the number you provide in connection with the COVID-19 testing process. If applicable, you may also log into the testing laboratory's patient portal to view your results. Also, the Diocese may utilize COVID-19 tests that are conducted by the individual himself/herself. In the end, you are responsible to provide the Diocese with current and accurate testing results for your testing required by this policy because we will rely upon the information you provide to determine whether you are in compliance with this policy.

**12. How will the tests be administered?**

Employees and clergy members will be provided with additional information on the administration of the weekly COVID-19 testing, including when and how often testing will be required, and where the test(s) will be made available. Currently, weekly COVID-19 testing will be at no cost to employees.

If applicable, you will need to review, sign, and return the applicable COVID-19 consent and authorization forms prior to your first test. Consent and authorization generally will not be needed for future tests for the same event or program.

The test specimens will be sent to the designated lab(s), which have been approved to perform diagnostic COVID-19 testing. Note, these labs are required to report results to the applicable public health authorities. Also, the Diocese may utilize COVID-19 that are conducted by the individual himself/herself.

**13. Will new hires be subject to this policy?**

Yes, all new hires are required to be fully vaccinated on or before their start date. Limited exceptions to the policy requirements based on disability, religion or other protected category will be considered on a case-by-case basis as required by applicable state and federal laws.

**14. Who has access to my COVID-19 vaccination status information and/or test results?**

The Diocese will treat vaccination status information and COVID-19 test results as confidential medical information to the extent required by law. In addition, such information will only be used as necessary and appropriate to maintain the health and safety of employees, new hires and congregants working at or visiting the premises of the Diocese. Access to these results generally will be limited to the Bishop and certain authorized TECH as necessary and appropriate to carry out COVID-19 testing and related purposes described in these FAQs.

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**15. Will the Diocese share vaccination status or test results publicly?**

Generally, no. The Diocese will not share individual vaccination status data or COVID-19 testing results publicly. However, we will share such information as required by law, such as may be required by health oversight agencies.

**16. Am I still required to go through the weekly COVID-19 testing process if I am fully vaccinated or receive a negative COVID-19 test result?**

It depends. The Diocese may still implement additional COVID-19 testing along with any and all other workplace health and safety protocols. Also, it is important to note that neither vaccination nor negative test result guarantees that an individual is not COVID-19 positive or that the individual will not become positive for COVID-19 in the future. Therefore, it is important for individuals to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and follow all of the Diocese's COVID-19 safe work and worship environment protocols and procedures.

**17. Whom may I contact if I have additional questions or need additional information or assistance regarding COVID-19 Testing?**

If you have questions about the vaccination mandate or the COVID-19 testing alternative, you may contact the Diocesan Support Office, the testing provider, or the manufacturer of the test using the information provided in the FDA Fact Sheet.

**18. Can the Diocese make revisions to this policy and vaccination and testing requirements and/or protocols?**

Yes. The Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii fully intends to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local law or guidance regarding COVID-19. We are monitoring all guidance and reserve the right to modify this policy, its vaccination and testing requirements and/or protocols as we determine may be necessary or appropriate. For example, if COVID-19 vaccine booster shots are recommended or mandated, that will become a requirement to meet the vaccination standard of this policy.