



What's New in HR Law

City of Toronto Recommends Implementation of COVID-19 Vaccination Policies

August 20, 2021

Bottom Line

On August 19, 2021 the City of Toronto announced that it would be implementing a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for its employees, and would be encouraging other employers to follow its lead. On August 20, 2021 Toronto's Medical Officer of Health announced that she was strongly recommending that local employers institute a workplace vaccination policy as a means of protecting their employees and the public from the virus.

City of Toronto's Mandatory Policy

In its [media release](#) issued on August 19, 2021, the City of Toronto announced it would be implementing a new mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy which, subject to human rights accommodation obligations, would require:

- all employees to disclose and provide proof of their vaccination status by September 13, 2021;
- mandatory education on the benefits of vaccination for any unvaccinated employee or for any employee who has not disclosed their vaccination status by September 13, 2021;

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- unvaccinated employees to provide proof of having received a first dose of an approved vaccine by September 30, 2021; and
- all employees to have received their first and second doses of an approved vaccine by October 30, 2021.

Although not yet finalized, the City of Toronto indicated that its policy would be made available to the public in the coming days.

Recommendation Issued to all Toronto Employers

In a [media release](#) issued on August 20, 2021, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Eileen de Villa, strongly recommended to Toronto employers that they institute a workplace vaccination policy to protect their employees and the public from COVID-19. However, the recommendation stops short of recommending **mandatory** vaccination policies. Instead, it leaves much of the substance of the policy and, in particular, the consequences of non-vaccination, up to employers' individual discretion.

Toronto Public Health has developed resources to guide employers in the development of their own policies. These resources can be found online [here](#).

In addition to recommending the implementation of policies, Dr. de Villa also recommends that employers continue to take the following precautions:

- COVID-19 testing;
- Strict adherence to physical distancing and other public health measures;
- Wearing personal protective equipment; and
- Ensuring that appropriate ventilation is in place.

Dr. de Villa also strongly recommended that organizations determine a method for attendees of gatherings of 1,000 individuals or more to demonstrate proof of their vaccination status and to follow public health measures established under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act*.

Employers operating in the City of Toronto can also apply to host an on-site vaccination clinic. Applications can be submitted online [here](#). The media release suggests that Toronto Public Health will follow up with applicants to discuss eligibility for an on-site clinic.

Check the Box

As we have seen throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of workplace vaccination policies is one that is evolving rapidly. Employers will want to review and carefully consider their own approach to vaccination in the workplace in light of these recent developments.

Need more information?

For more information about, or for assistance preparing or revising a vaccination policy for your workplace, contact [Tawanda Masimbe](#) at 416-408-5506, [Ashley Brown](#) at 416-408-5563, or your regular lawyer at the firm.



management labour and employment law



Toronto

Bay Adelaide Centre
333 Bay Street, Suite 2500,
PO Box 44
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2R2
tel: 416.408.3221
fax: 416.408.4814
toronto@filiation.on.ca

London

620A Richmond Street, 2nd Floor
London, Ontario N6A 5J9
tel: 519.433.7270
fax: 519.433.4453
london@filiation.on.ca

Hamilton

1 King Street West, Suite 1201
Box 57030
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4W9
tel: 905.526.8904
fax: 905.577.0805
hamilton@filiation.on.ca

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