

**COVID-19 WORKPLACE SAFETY SAMPLE POLICY**



Creating and approving a written COVID-19 workplace safety policy that protects workers (including volunteers), clients and visitors, and their families from the spread of COVID-19 is a critical part of returning to the workplace for any nonprofit. Be sure that you are prepared to consistently enforce all aspects of the policy you create. Your organization should develop a policy based on local, state, and federal regulations and in collaboration with regulatory agencies. Once you create and approve your written COVID-19 workplace safety policy, implement a communications process for workers, clients, and visitors to ensure their awareness and understanding of the policy as well as your nonprofit’s reasoning for any future changes that may be needed.

Created in October 2021, this COVID-19 Workplace Safety Sample Policy provides sample language, example strategies, and other items your nonprofit may consider while crafting your own COVID-19 workplace safety policy. Visit the [Washington State Department of Labor & Industries](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-topics/topics/coronavirus) (L&I) for the latest requirements and guidance for preventing COVID-19 at your workplace. You may use this sample policy to guide conversation with your workers and board, or to serve as a template for writing your policy. You may also find our COVID-19 Workplace Safety Checklist a helpful resource to assess your nonprofit’s readiness for workers, clients, and visitors to return to the workplace.

***Important Note:*** *This information is provided for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal or technical advice. If you are unsure about anything covered in this checklist, we suggest you contact the appropriate agency, employment attorney, or human resources specialist.*

Thank you to [**501 Commons**](https://www.501commons.org/) for your contributions to this resource!

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| **Tips for Using This Template:*** Copy the following pages to a new Word document to create your policy.
* Replace bracketed items that include the word “INSERT” (marked in red) with information specific to your organization.
* REQUIRED items are provided in a highlighted box .
* Notes for your consideration are indicated *with italics*.
 |  | **Template Outline:**INTRODUCTIONVACCINATIONSMASKS & FACE COVERINGS1. Workers2. Visitors & ClientsOPERATIONS1. Worker Health2. Physical Distancing3. Facilities & Workplace Cleaning4. Train, Assess, Notify, & Report5. Reasonable Accommodations & Discrimination |

[INSERT POLICY DATE]

# INTRODUCTION

[INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] created the following COVID-19 workplace safety policy to help protect workers, clients, and their families from the spread of COVID-19. As we return to the workplace, workers and visitors are expected to follow the established safety policies. The policies draw on current requirements and recommendations from federal, state, and local agencies including the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/) (CDC) and [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries](https://www.lni.wa.gov/) (L&I), which oversees workplace safety and health in the State. If you have questions about our COVID-19 workplace safety policies, please contact [INSERT IDENTIFIED PERSON ON YOUR TEAM].

***Note:*** *Your nonprofit should determine vaccination as well as mask and face covering approaches for workers, clients, and visitors. The following sections, on Vaccinations and Mask & Face Coverings, provide sample options for your organization to consider.*

# VACCINATIONS

Per the CDC website, in the United States, over 338 million doses have been given. COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of COVID-19 and the potentially severe complications. More information on COVID-19 vaccines is available through the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/your-vaccination.html). As a part of safeguarding the health of our workers and their families, our clients and visitors, and our larger community, [INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] implemented a [INSERT MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY] COVID-19 vaccination policy.

**Mandated**

Vaccine mandates are in place for [health care workers and long-term care workers](https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/inslee-issues-proclamation-requiring-vaccination-most-state-employees-health-and-long), [cabinet agency state employees](https://www.governor.wa.gov/office-governor/office/executive-cabinet), and [employees in educational and childcare settings](https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/inslee-announces-educator-vaccination-requirement-and-statewide-indoor-mask-mandate). These employees are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (at least two weeks after finishing the vaccine series) by October 18, 2021. The requirement includes contractors, volunteers, and any other positions that work in these settings. Individuals who hold a healthcare profession license are required to be vaccinated. If your organization is mandated to vaccinate staff by a governmental body, you may choose to note that in your policy.

***Note:*** *The* [*Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration*](https://www.osha.gov/) *(OSHA) is in the process of adopting a rule, which will require vaccination for employers with more than 100 workers. Specifics were not available at the time of publishing this resource. To learn more, please visit* [*OSHA’s COVID-19 webpage*](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)*.*

**Option 1**: Mandatory

We require all workers be fully vaccinated before returning to in-person work on [INSERT DATE – if applicable], unless a reasonable accommodation is requested and approved by [INSERT IDENTIFIED PERSON ON YOUR TEAM].

* You are considered fully vaccinated fourteen (14) or more days after receiving your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or your single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
* Unless a worker has an approved reasonable accommodation for exemption from the vaccination requirement, workers are required to provide an acceptable type of verification (see Vaccinations – Verification of Vaccination Status for more information) prior to returning to in-person work.
* A worker(s) not in compliance with the vaccination policy will be [INSERT YOUR NONPROFIT’S DISCIPLINARY MEASURE] until the worker(s) comply.

To support workers in getting vaccinated, we offer the following option(s) and incentive(s).

[INSERT LIST OPTION(S) AND INCENTIVE(S) THAT APPLY TO YOUR NONPROFIT]

***Note:*** *The following are examples of options and incentives that your nonprofit may consider. You may also consider a process to ask for input from workers on options and incentives that they feel are supportive.*

* On-site vaccination service
* Paid time off for vaccination appointment(s)
* Paid time off for recovery from possible side effects
1. Reasonable Accommodations & Discrimination

Employers must ensure workplaces remain safe and healthy for all, including workers with medical issues and disabilities (see the [Americans with Disabilities Act](https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/fact-sheet-disability-discrimination) and the [Washington State Human Rights Commission](https://www.hum.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/publications/COVID-19.pdf) for more information). In addition, the [Washington Health Emergency Labor Standards Act](https://www.lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F417-291-000.pdf) (HELSA) protects high-risk employees from being discharged, permanently replaced, or discriminated against in the workplace for seeking accommodation from exposure to an infectious or contagious disease during a public health emergency.

Any worker may request an accommodation for a medical issue or condition, disability, or sincerely held religious belief that prevents them from receiving the vaccination. Please contact [INSERT IDENTIFIED PERSON ON YOUR TEAM] to request a reasonable accommodation.

1. Verification of Vaccination Status

[INSERT IDENTIFIED PERSON ON YOUR TEAM] will review acceptable types of verification by [INSERT DATE – if applicable] through an [INSERT YOUR NONPROFIT’S PROCESS - ELECTRONIC, IN-PERSON, OR BOTH].

*Note: For your nonprofit, identify the type(s) of acceptable verification allowed by L&I that you will review.*

Acceptable types of verification include:

* Vaccine card or photo of vaccine card
* Documentation from a health care provider
* State immunization system record
* A hard copy or electronic signed self-attestation\* from the worker

***\**** *Self-attestation is not an acceptable verification option for state agencies, schools, or health care settings. Further, private employers are not required to offer self-attestation as a verification method.*

As an employer, we must be able to show the process used to verify worker vaccination status. Any vaccination record provided will be kept confidential. Please refer to the Mask & Face Covering section for guidance on our policy.

**Option 2**: Voluntary

We strongly encourage all workers to be fully vaccinated. You are considered fully vaccinated fourteen (14) or more days after receiving your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or your single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Unvaccinated workers, or workers who have unknown vaccination status, are required to wear a mask while working indoors, except when working alone in an office, vehicle, at a job site where there is not interaction with people, or when outdoors.

Fully vaccinated workers, please refer to the **Mask & Face Coverings** section for guidance.

To support workers in getting vaccinated, we offer the following option(s) and incentive(s).

[INSERT LIST OF OPTION(S) AND INCENTIVE(S) THAT APPLY TO YOUR NONPROFIT]

*Note: The following are examples of options and incentives that your nonprofit may consider. You may also consider a process to ask for input from workers on options and incentives that they feel are supportive.*

* On-site vaccination service
* Paid time off for vaccination appointment(s)
* Paid time off for recovery from possible side effects

# MASKS & FACE COVERINGS

Masks and face coverings remain an important part of COVID-19 workplace safety measures. [INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] implemented a mask policy for workers that is [INSERT YOUR NONPROFIT’S POLICY – MANDATORY FOR UNVACCINATED, MANDATORY FOR ALL, OR STRONGLY ENCOURAGED FOR ALL]. In addition, we implemented a mask policy for clients and visitors that is [INSERT YOUR NONPROFIT’S POLICY – sample options are outlined below]

**Mandated**

[Masks are required](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/ClothFaceCoveringsandMasks) for everyone five years of age or older in public indoor settings and at large, outdoor events with 500 or more attendees, regardless of vaccination status. Public indoor settings include a workplace where people outside the organization may be present. A few exceptions to note for your workplace include:

* People with a medical or mental health condition or disability that prevents them from wearing a mask
* Anyone working alone, regardless of vaccination status (You may wish to include relevant examples of working alone that apply for your organization, e.g. in a space with a closed door, in a car, etc.)
* Verified fully vaccinated workers who are working in an area not accessible to the public

Depending on the type of work you do, mask requirements may be different for your organization than for the general public. [Masking guidance for employers is available on L&I’s website](https://www.lni.wa.gov/agency/outreach/novel-coronavirus-outbreak-covid-19-resources).

## 1. Workers

**Option 1**: Mandatory for Unvaccinated Workers

Unvaccinated workers, or workers who have unknown vaccination status, are required to wear a mask while working indoors, except when working alone in an office, vehicle, at a job site where there is not interaction with people, or when outdoors. [INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will provide cloth face coverings or a more protective mask to workers, free of charge, when use of masks is required.

After a worker’s vaccination verification is complete (see Vaccinations – Verification of Vaccination Status), a fully vaccinated worker is not required to wear a mask and/or face covering in the workplace. Regardless of vaccination status, workers have the right to wear a mask or other protective equipment, as long as it does not create safety issues.

**Option 2**: Mandatory for All Workers

Masks and face coverings are mandatory for all workers, regardless of vaccination status.

[INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will provide cloth face coverings or a more protective mask to workers, free of charge.

**Option 3**: Strongly Encouraged for All Workers

Masks and face coverings are strongly encouraged for all workers, regardless of vaccination status.

[INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will provide cloth face coverings or a more protective mask to workers, free of charge, when use of masks is required.

Unvaccinated workers, or workers who have unknown vaccination status, are required to wear a mask while working indoors, except when working alone in an office, vehicle, at a job site where there is not interaction with people, or when outdoors.

Any worker not wanting to wear a mask or face covering in the workplace must provide an acceptable type of vaccination verification (see Vaccinations – Verification of Vaccination Status) in accordance with our stated policy.

## 2. Visitors & Clients

**Note:** *At this time, Option 3 below is the only allowable option given State regulations. Options 1 and 2 are presented so that you can adapt your policy to new circumstances in the future.*

**Option 1**: Mandatory for Unvaccinated Visitors & Clients – No Inquiry of Status

Unvaccinated individuals, or those who have unknown vaccination status, are required to wear a mask.

Children under the age of 2 years old and people with certain medical conditions are not required to wear a mask (see the [Washington State Department of Health – Face Coverings and Masks](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/ClothFaceCoveringsandMasks) for more information). We will post signage prominently at all entrances informing visitors and clients of the mask requirement (sample sign in [English](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/MaskRequirementWhiteBackgroundNoProof.pdf) and [Spanish](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-189-MaskRequirementWhiteBackgroundNoProof-Spanish.pdf)).

If an individual(s) enters without a mask or face covering, we will assume the individual(s) are fully vaccinated and workers will not inquiry about vaccination status.

**Option 2**: Mandatory for Unvaccinated Visitors & Clients – Inquiry of Status

Unvaccinated individuals, or those who have unknown vaccination status, are required to wear a mask.

Children under the age of 2 years old and people with certain medical conditions are not required to wear a mask (see the [Washington State Department of Health – Face Coverings and Masks](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/ClothFaceCoveringsandMasks) for more information). We will post signage prominently at all entrances informing visitors and clients of the mask requirement (sample sign in [English](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/MaskRequirementWhiteBackgroundProof.pdf) and [Spanish](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-188-MaskRequirementWhiteBackgroundProof-Spanish.pdf)).

If an individual(s) enters without a mask or face covering, workers will communicate with the individual(s) to ensure they are aware of the mask requirement and to inquiry if the individual(s) are fully vaccinated (or otherwise exempt). In all cases, workers should not inquire or engage an individual(s) if they believe that action would pose a threat to worker safety.

[INQUIRY OPTIONS TO CONSIDER – Identify and insert an approach that works for your nonprofit and workers]

* We will require review of an acceptable type of vaccination verification (see Vaccinations – Verification of Vaccination Status)
* We will have individuals sign and date a self-attestation stating they are fully vaccinated
* We will accept an individual’s stated confirmation of full vaccination without further inquiry

[COMPLIANCE OPTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR EXEMPT INDIVIDUALS – Identify and insert an approach that works for your nonprofit and workers]

If the individual states they are not fully vaccinated, and is exempt from wearing a mask, [INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will do the following.

* Offer a reasonable accommodation like an alternative way to provide and receive services, if feasible
* If the reasonable accommodation is refused, we may deny the individual entry
* If the reasonable accommodation is refused, we may allow the individual to enter

[COMPLIANCE OPTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR NO INFO/REFUSAL – Identify and insert an approach that works for your nonprofit and workers]

If an individual declines to provide vaccination verification information or refuses to wear a mask (not including those who are exempt), [INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will do the following.

* Offer an alternative way to provide and receive services, if feasible
* If alternative services are refused, deny the individual entry
* Deny entry and services

**Option 3**: Mandatory for All Visitors & Clients

All individuals regardless of vaccination status are required to wear a mask or face covering. Children under the age of 2 years old and people with certain medical conditions are not required to wear a mask (see the [Washington State Department of Health – Face Coverings and Masks](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/ClothFaceCoveringsandMasks) for more information). We will post signage prominently at all entrances informing visitors and clients of the mask requirement (sample sign in [English](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-188-MasksRequiredIndoorsSign.pdf) and [Spanish](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-188-MasksRequiredIndoorsSign-Spanish.pdf)).

[COMPLIANCE OPTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR EXEMPT INDIVIDUALS – Identify and insert an approach that works for your nonprofit and workers]

If the individual states they are otherwise exempt from wearing a mask, [INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will do the following.

* Offer a reasonable accommodation like an alternative way to provide and receive services, if feasible
* If the reasonable accommodation is refused, we may deny the individual entry (unless there are worker safety concerns)
* If the reasonable accommodation is refused, we may allow the individual to enter

[COMPLIANCE OPTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR REFUSAL – Identify and insert an approach that works for your nonprofit and workers]

If an individual refuses to wear a mask or face covering (not including those who are exempt), [INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will do the following, unless there are worker safety concerns.

* Offer an alternative way to provide and receive services, if feasible
* If alternative services are refused, deny the individual entry
* Deny entry and services

# OPERATIONS

## 1. Worker Health

If an individual(s) (workers, clients, and/or visitors) test positive for, are showing [symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) of, or recently had [close contact](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html) with a person who has COVID-19, they are required to stay home.

* If you test positive for, are showing symptoms of, or recently had close contact with a person who has COVID-19, please contact [INSERT IDENTIFIED PERSON ON YOUR TEAM] as soon as possible.
* We will not require a doctor’s note from sick workers.
* [INSERT ANY SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SICK LEAVE POLICIES]

*Note: Ensure your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and employees are aware of policies. Also, maintain policies that allow workers to care for sick family members.*

We will keep workers with possible or confirmed cases of COVID-19 from working around others and follow appropriate [isolation and quarantine guidance](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/CaseInvestigationsandContactTracing/IsolationandQuarantineforCOVID19) as required.

[INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will offer modified job responsibilities to [workers at higher risk](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html) for severe illness that limit exposure risk.

## 2. Physical Distancing

There are no specific mandated occupancy or physical distancing requirements. However, physical distancing is considered an effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19. [INSERT YOUR NONPROFIT NAME] will use the following practices to help workers, visitors, and clients physical distance while in our workplace.

[INSERT LIST OF STRATEGIES YOUR NONPROFIT WILL USE]

***Note:*** *The following are examples of strategies to consider for implementation at your nonprofit to help with physical distancing.*

* Control the number of people entering our workplace by limiting the number of clients and visitors to [INSERT IDENTIFIED NUMBER] per [INSERT TIME PERIOD, if applicable]
* Limit visitor, client, and worker access to [INSERT COMMON GATHERING AREA(S) – e.g. lunchroom]
* Space workstations at least six feet from each other
* Eliminate physical contact with others, such as handshakes or embracing coworkers or visitors
* Provide markers for waiting lines to help people maintain physical distance
* Modify counters or tables where people interact to facilitate maintaining distance
* Use barriers where people interact

We will also use scheduling and meeting specific strategies to help with physical distancing of workers.

* Stagger work schedules to reduce worker crowding when arriving and leaving the workplace
* Use a clear scheduling or calendar system that all workers can view to coordinate arrivals, departures, and/or shared space usage
* Hold in-person meetings only when needed
* Hold in-person meetings in large rooms or outdoors so workers can spread out

## 3. Facilities & Workplace Cleaning

Providing proper facilities and frequent workplace cleaning is another key part of reducing the spread of COVID-19. [INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will implement the following steps in our facilities.

* Provide handwashing facilities and supplies
* Make tissues, trashcans, and hand sanitizer (that is at least 60% alcohol) available throughout the facility
* Display posters prominently that support [staying home when sick](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf) (in [Spanish](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet-sp.pdf)) and [stopping the spread of germs](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/images/print-materials/Stop_the_spread_vaccinated_v2.pdf)
* Post [signage](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/images/print-materials/Stop_the_spread_vaccinated_v2.pdf) and educate all workers on basic hygiene practices

Ensuring adequate ventilation throughout the work environment can help to maintain a safe and healthy workplace (see [L&I’s COVID-19 Guidance on Ventilation in the Workplace](https://www.lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-173-000.pdf) for more information). To the best of our ability, we will maximize fresh air and air filtration settings in our HVAC systems. We will add air filtration in areas of the workplace with poor ventilation.

We established a cleaning schedule that includes regular, frequent, and periodic cleaning that depends on how the area is used. [INSERT CLEANING SCHEDULE SPECIFICS TO YOUR NONPROFIT – Be sure to consider different types of areas like high use, worker only spaces, public spaces, etc.]

We will follow [best practices for cleaning and disinfecting](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/documents/cleaning-disinfecting-one-pager.pdf) as well as [safe and effective disinfectant use](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/documents/disinfectants-onepager.pdf). [INSERT IDENTIFIED PERSON ON YOUR TEAM] will ensure workers are trained on safe and proper use of cleaning chemicals and communicate any potential hazards. Specific cleaning practices and expectations are as follows.

* Use only cleaning products registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and disinfectants from the EPA’s List N to kill SARS-CoV-2 (the specific coronavirus that causes COVID-19)
* Wear gloves and eye-and-face protection when mixing, spraying, and wiping liquid products
* Ensure adequate ventilation when using cleaning and disinfecting products to prevent inhaling toxic vapors

For an individual’s workspace, we encourage you to disinfect your own workspace throughout the day, giving special attention to any common surfaces and high tough objects (like door handles, tables and desks, keyboards, etc.). [INSERT NONPROFIT NAME] will make cleaning wipes available to all workers for disinfecting their workspace.

## 4. Train, Assess, Notify, & Report

Per [L&I’s Requirements and Guidance for Preventing COVID-19](https://lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-164-000.pdf) (current as of September 13, 2021), as an employer we are required to do the following.

* Train workers to recognize and respond to workplace hazards, including COVID-19
* Assess recognized hazards, including COVID-19, as part of the ongoing requirement to provide a safe and healthy workplace
* Take additional steps to protect unvaccinated workers, where appropriate
* Notify all workers, and the employers of subcontracted employees, in writing within one (1) business day if they were at the same worksite as a person who tested positive for COVID-19 (without disclosing the person’s identity). Ensure workers are aware of the contact tracing completed and provide further information to workers as needed.
* [INSERT/INCLUDE THIS IF YOUR NONPROFIT IS A LARGE EMPLOYER – Greater than 50 employees at a given workplace or worksite] Report COVID-19 outbreaks of ten (10) or more workers at workplaces or worksites with more than 50 employees to L&I within 24 hours.

## 5. Reasonable Accommodations & Discrimination

Employers must ensure workplaces remain safe and healthy for all, including workers with medical issues and disabilities (see the [Americans with Disabilities Act](https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/fact-sheet-disability-discrimination) and the [Washington State Human Rights Commission](https://www.hum.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/publications/COVID-19.pdf) for more information). In addition, the [Washington Health Emergency Labor Standards Act](https://www.lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F417-291-000.pdf) (HELSA) protects high-risk employees from being discharged, permanently replaced, or discriminated against in the workplace for seeking accommodation from exposure to an infectious or contagious disease during a public health emergency.