

Health & Safety in a Pandemic Environment

Effective May 1, 2022



Policy Statement

Purpose and Scope

The health and safety of employees and directors is our priority. As part of our community responsibility, HTM Insurance is committed to taking every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the health and safety of staff and others from the hazard of corona viruses, such as COVID-19. HKPR recommends companies promote vaccinations as an important measure to protect their staff and the public in general. This document outlines a variety of health and safety measures, but vaccinations will be promoted as one of the most critical control measures for the hazard of corona viruses, such as COVID-19.

Background and Current Situation

Shortly after the pandemic started in 2020 (late 2019), vaccines were developed. The vaccines were tested and showed excellent results in preventing infection, spread of the virus and serious illness or death and a significant portion of Canada's eligible population became vaccinated (by 2022, over 80%). Later a variant called Delta came out and became the dominant virus in the world population. The health profession tested and showed the vaccines were still effective against this variant although the capability to prevent infection and transmission dropped. A 3rd dose or booster was recommended for some of the more vulnerable in the population. The Omicron variant arrived in December of 2021 and within weeks became the dominant strain. This variant was more infectious and proved to be more vaccine resistant, which meant less protection from contracting Covid-19 or spreading Covid-19 even with the vaccines and boosters. Favourably, hospitalizations, ICU admissions and deaths were still greatly reduced with the vaccine.

As an organization operating through the pandemic, knowing the best approach to take to keep our staff safe has been a priority and a challenge.

Support of Vaccination

HTM Insurance Health & Safety in a Pandemic Environment policy supports the health benefits of being vaccinated. If operationally feasible and with the permission of their immediate supervisor, employees can be released on work time to be vaccinated while on-duty, without loss of compensation or the requirement to use credits, to a maximum of one day.

Vaccination
Reporting

Competent and effective Health and safety planning requires knowledge of your vaccination status, which must be reported to your direct manager. We will follow the Province of Ontario guidelines as to what status you fall into ... fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated or unvaccinated. Your status will remain confidential to your manager.

You can personally enter your status in the BambooHR tool by going into the “My Info” tab, clicking on “More” in the menu and you will see a “Covid-19” option.

Working with
people inside
the
organization

As an organization, we will take all reasonable precautions and safety measures to mitigate the risks of infection. In addition to the normal safety measures outlined later in this document, we will use strategies such as scheduling employees’ time in the office(s) to assist in providing for a comfortable environment.

Based on the pandemic situation at the time, and with due consideration to the prevailing rules and guidance through local Health Unit(s), management may request unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals to work from home for a period of time.

Unvaccinated
Employees

Employees who remain unvaccinated may be required to take additional infection and prevention control measures, including taking the Rapid tests when entering the office as well as additional self-isolation time if exposed to or infected with COVID-19.

Scheduling may be different for non-vaccinated individuals.

Unvaccinated employees may not be able to attend all functions based on vaccination requirements (such as OMIA education or social functions where third-party venues have their own vaccination requirements).

Accommodation

HTM will do everything we can to accommodate the requirements of our employees during a pandemic. In some circumstances we may not be able to accommodate an employee’s needs. As a small organization, no accommodation that causes us undue hardship can be made. In a case where a reasonable accommodation is not possible, unpaid leave may be the only option.

Working with
people outside
the
organization

As a service organization, we cannot reasonably avoid working with the unvaccinated population. Certain jobs require close contact with our policyholders, such as loss prevention, agents, adjusters and reception. In addition to the policyholders we serve, there are our own employees, brokers and other service providers that come into the office. We cannot eliminate every situation in the workplace that may involve an unvaccinated person.

To this end, employees & directors will be provided with tools to reduce the risk in these interactions. Providing contactless services as much as possible through phone, email or by using digital tools such as video conferencing is available. When some contact is required or preferred, physical distancing, limiting duration of contact, & wearing a facemask will be required. If you are able to, make plans with the person(s) you are meeting with in advance to discuss how, together, you can create the safest environment possible.

Events

In some cases, in-person events (education, conferences, meetings) offer the best interactive experience for learning, teambuilding and/or networking. We will weigh the value of in-person attendance versus the risk when making the choice.

Further Health
and Safety
Precautions

Based on the current pandemic environment, all employees and directors will be required to comply with applicable health and safety measures, implemented by the company, to reduce the hazard of corona viruses, such as COVID-19. These measures can include (but are not limited to) the following; compliance with established workplace access controls (e.g. screening questionnaires), wearing a mask or face covering, temperature checks, rapid testing, maintaining appropriate physical distancing and self-monitoring of potential COVID-19 symptoms when at work.

If you are unsure of what measures are currently in place, check with your manager or the President.

Non-
Compliance
with Policy

Should circumstances of non-compliance arise, which require redress, we will follow the process outlined in the HTM's Human Resource manual for disciplinary actions.
