



**Severn Sound Environmental Association
Joint Municipal Service Board
2021 Fourth Quarterly Meeting (Q4) – January 27, 2022**

STAFF REPORT

No: 61-21-SSEA
Date: January 21, 2022
To: Chair and Members of the SSEA Board of Directors
From: Julie Cayley, Executive Director
SUBJECT: SSEA Covid-19 Vaccination Policy

APPLICABLE STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:

Goal 4: An Exceptional Organization

RECOMMENDATION:

RESOLVED THAT: Staff Report No. 61-21-SSEA regarding SSEA Covid-19 Vaccination Policy, be received for information.

Purpose of Staff Report

This staff report serves to share the SSEA workplace Covid-19 Vaccination Policy with the Board.

Background

The October 25, 2021 SSEA Board meeting included an action item to have SSEA staff develop a vaccine policy. Currently, there is no federal or provincial law that requires mandatory vaccinations for all workplaces. However, all employers do have a legal obligation to create a safe and healthy workplace for employees under Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). This means many organizations, including SSEA Municipal partners, are introducing vaccination policies to comply with their OHSA obligations. On August 17, 2021, the Ontario Government announced that it would mandate COVID-19 vaccination policies for high-risk settings like hospitals, schools and childcare facilities to keep the province's most vulnerable populations safe. SSEA partner municipalities have vaccination policies for their staff.

Analysis/Discussion

On January 5, 2022, the Province announced additional public health measures to stop the transmission of the Omicron variant and prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed. As a result of these temporary measures, the Province says there are signs of stabilization in key public health and health system indicators, and that they expect these trends to continue. In the absence of concerning trends in public health and health care indicators, Ontario will follow a cautious and phased approach to lifting public health measures, with 21 days between each step. Local and regional responses by public health units may be deployed based on local

context and conditions. SSEA's Covid-19 Vaccination Policy is designed to support these measures by enhancing workplace safety.

Expected Impact on SSEA budget/workload

Minimal. As of the date this report was prepared, 100% of SSEA employees are considered fully vaccinated (as per 2 doses).

Conclusion/Recommendations

The SSEA Covid-19 Vaccination Policy is a step towards assisting the organization return to its former customer service levels, while enhancing the safety of SSEA employees, volunteers and stakeholders.

Prepared by:
Original signed by

Approved for Submission by:
Original Signed by

Cliff Evanitski, Office Manager

Julie Cayley, Executive Director

Attachment: SSEA Covid-19 Vaccination Policy



Severn Sound Environmental Association Policy/Procedure

Policy Name: COVID-19 Vaccination		
Effective Date: January 1, 2022	Revision Date:	Policy Number: 001-2022
Corporate Policy (Approved by SSEA Board)		[]
Administrative Policy (Approved by ED)		[X]
Date Approved by Board:		
Related Documents/Legislation: Occupational Health and Safety Act (Ontario)		

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA) is committed to providing a safe working environment for our employees and members of the public with whom we interact regularly, by putting in place a program to ensure employees are fully immunized against COVID-19 or regularly tested for COVID-19. This policy recognizes that those who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated pose a significantly increased risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 and also of spreading the virus to others, with significant impact on human health and workplace continuity. This policy aims to achieve full vaccination amongst SSEA staff in alignment with provincial directives but is also cognizant of an individual’s right to choose and stresses that bullying will not be tolerated. Based on the status of the Pandemic, this policy will be reviewed regularly and may be revised to ensure it meets current public health direction.

PURPOSE:

COVID-19 and COVID-19 variants present a significant health risk, particularly in unvaccinated people. This procedure recognizes that vaccination against COVID-19 is the most effective measure to reduce the risk of severe illness and transmission to others, including staff and members of the public. This has a significant impact on human health and business continuity. Under clause 25(2)(h) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*, the employer is required to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker. The Medical Officer of Health, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, recommends that all workplaces develop and implement a vaccination policy. The employer has a responsibility to protect the health and safety of employees, students and volunteers.

SCOPE:

- a) This policy applies to all employees (full-time, part-time, temporary contract), students and volunteers of the Severn Sound Environmental Association.
- b) All persons whom this policy applies to will be subject to this policy as a condition of their employment, volunteer work or for purposes of engaging their services to run programs.
- c) Where this policy refers to “employees” it is also referring to those listed in section a) of the Scope.
- d) The scope of this policy may be amended from time to time at the sole discretion of the SSEA.

DEFINITIONS:

Contraindication: Refers to a condition that serves as a reason not to take a certain medical treatment due to the harm that it would cause the patient.

COVID-19: Refers to a virus belonging to a large family called coronavirus, which includes the virus that causes the common cold and more severe respiratory diseases. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus, named SARS-CoV-2.

Fully Vaccinated: Having received the full series (and any future shots) of a COVID-19 vaccine or combination of COVID-19 vaccines approved by Health Canada; and having received the final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago.

Office: SSEA Office 489 Finlayson St. Port McNicoll

Partially Vaccinated: A person is considered partially vaccinated when a 2 dose vaccine series is not complete, i.e., has received only 1 dose of a 2-dose series OR if less than 14 days have elapsed since completion of the vaccine series.

PCR Test: The polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for COVID-19 is a molecular test that analyses an upper respiratory specimen, looking for genetic material (ribonucleic acid or RNA) of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Proof of Medical Exemption: Written proof of a medical reason, provided by a physician or nurse practitioner in the extended class that sets out:

1. a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and
2. the effective time-period for the medical reason.

Proof of Vaccination: Documentation issued by the Ontario Ministry of Health, other province or territory or international equivalent indicating individual immunization status against the COVID-19 virus. In Ontario, this would be the Ontario enhanced vaccine certificate with a QR code (or Province of Ontario equivalent). For people who have been vaccinated outside of Ontario, acceptable proof is based on the criteria provided by the province/state, territory and/or country in which they received their vaccine but only NACI approved vaccines will be accepted. Proof shall include name, date of birth, date of vaccination, vaccine name, lot number, and name of the health care practitioner administering the vaccine. Requirements will follow updates as per Province of Ontario at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/proof-covid-19-vaccination>

Rapid Antigen Test: Antigen-based tests detect specific proteins on the surface of the virus. They're often called rapid tests, as they typically provide results in less than an hour. In general, rapid antigen tests are used by a health care professional or trained operator at point-of-care, but lab-based rapid antigen tests exist as well. Rapid antigen tests can be performed by health professionals or any individual who is [trained](#) (including self-swabbing). Any individual is considered trained when they have consulted the [appropriate training materials](#).

Vaccine: A substance used to stimulate the production of antibodies and provide immunity against specific diseases. Includes all required doses for a fully defined vaccination and include subsequent booster vaccination dose(s) as required by Public Health.

Volunteers: Are persons who freely offer to take part in work for projects and/or programs delivered by the SSEA. It does not apply to volunteers appointed to committees where no "in person" interaction or work is required.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Employees

- a) Disclose vaccination status and comply with the provisions outlined in this procedure.
- b) Continue to follow health and safety protocols to ensure personal safety and prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- c) Adhere to any Federal or Provincial or Health Unit legislation, directives, or mandates requiring vaccination.

Directors/Supervisors

- a) Provide employees with direction for access to information on COVID-19 and the associated health and safety precautions.
- b) Where feasible, support time from regular duties for staff to attend vaccination clinics.
- c) Follow and comply with any Federal or Provincial or Health Unit legislation, directives, or mandate regarding the vaccination of staff.
- d) Continue to communicate and enforce workplace precautions that limit the spread of COVID-19 virus.
- e) Manage staff who do not comply with the requirement of this procedure, in consultation with the Executive Director.

Executive Director/Human Resource Designated Managers

- a) Verify vaccination records in a manner that ensures medical confidentiality is maintained.
- b) Assist supervisors with any employee relations and health and safety issues arising from application of this procedure.
- c) Provide information and guidance to supervisors and employees on COVID-19 immunization.
- d) Provide information to Directors/Supervisors to ensure worker eligibility to access the workplace.
- e) Provide accommodation support for staff as required, in accordance with medical documentation.
- f) Provide and Assist management with any performance management due to non-compliance of the procedure.
- g) Provide COVID-19 education component to unvaccinated staff.

PROCEDURES:

Employee Immunization

1. The SSEA is requesting that all employees, who are able, to become **fully vaccinated** against COVID-19 as a measure to protect their health and the health of their co-workers and members of the public.
2. All employees are required to disclose their vaccination status to the Executive Director in accordance with this policy. Current vaccination status shall be disclosed by end of day on January 31, 2022. Employees who are **Fully or Partially Vaccinated** must also show **Proof of Vaccination** to the Executive Director at this time. Employees must also complete a Verification of Truth Statement (Attachment A) for their vaccination status.
3. Employees who choose not to disclose vaccination status will be assumed to be unvaccinated and subject to the same provisions as an unvaccinated staff.
4. Notwithstanding that an individual is fully vaccinated, they are still required to adhere to applicable testing and personal protective requirements mandated by Public Health authorities and/or the SSEA.

Accommodation

1. Vaccination requirements are subject to bona fide medical and human rights exceptions. Unique medical exemptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the SSEA's accommodation process.
2. The SSEA will comply with its human rights obligations and accommodate employees who are legally entitled to accommodation.
3. Requests for medical accommodation shall be made by providing the Executive Director with a *COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption Form* (Attachment B). This form is to be completed by a Physician or Nurse Practitioner. The SSEA, at its sole discretion, may refer medical accommodation requests to a third-party disability adjudicator.
4. The Executive Director will work with staff who receive an approved exemption to develop an appropriate accommodation plan with alternative health and safety measures.

Mandatory COVID-19 Education

Employees who do not intend to be Fully Vaccinated or who choose not to disclose their vaccination status must complete an Educational Program approved by the SSEA by the date assigned. This will ensure they are adequately informed about the COVID-19 vaccines and the risks associated with not being immunized.

Unvaccinated Employees

1. By **January 31, 2022**, those under the policy scope must show the Executive Director proof of vaccination. Physical or electronic proof will not be collected. Documentation will be visually verified in-person and tracked on a spreadsheet. **Do not** send verification via email.

2. Those who are not **Fully Vaccinated** on or before **January 31, 2022**, or who have not shown **Proof of Vaccination**, must submit **Proof of Vaccination** for a first dose by **January 31, 2022**. **Proof of Vaccination** for a second dose must be submitted by **March 1, 2022**.
3. Employees who are not able to get **Fully Vaccinated** as a result of a medical contraindication or other *Code*-protected reason must provide **Proof of Medical Exemption** via the *COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption Form for Staff* (see attached) or discuss the reason as it related to the Human Rights Code if not for medical reasons.
4. Where an employee is not fully vaccinated, the following will apply:
 - a) The employee shall wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with SSEA policy and do so even after such precautions are no longer required by applicable Public Health authorities contingent on SSEA policy.
 - b) Undergo regular (at least twice per week for employees accessing the office) **rapid antigen screening tests** or equivalent and supply results in the manner requested by the SSEA on a schedule outlined by the SSEA. The frequency of such testing may be increased or decreased, at the SSEA's sole discretion. Testing must be witnessed by a supervisor, manager or designate. If there are costs associated for such testing the cost will be the responsibility of the employee unless they are under an approved human rights accommodation.
5. Employees who screen positive on a rapid antigen test shall not be allowed to work and will be required to isolate and be tested (or re-tested) according to Province of Ontario and Health Unit guidelines. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/exposedor positive test>
<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-test-and-testing-location-information>
6. Public Health isolation requirements resulting from choosing to remain unvaccinated will be unpaid by the SSEA, with exception of any provincial legislation. Staff who are eligible may use their sick time and if unavailable vacation or banked time.
7. The above restrictions will remain in place until the employee shows proof of vaccination to the Executive Director.
8. SSEA can refuse to work with someone if they are not vaccinated, or require them to work isolated from other employees/students/volunteers.

Access to Vaccination Appointments

1. Reasonable arrangements will be made to allow for employees to attend COVID-19 vaccination appointments during work time.
2. Employees require approval from their supervisor in advance before attending a vaccination appointment during work time. Time is to be coded as sick time for those afforded sick time entitlement. Part-time staff and/or contract staff who do not have a sick time entitlement may be paid under a government benefit program.
3. Employees who report minor vaccination side effects may still attend work by following the provincial workplace screening directions (SSEA Screening via <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/screening/worker/>).

4. Employees who have adverse health reactions from the vaccine (headache, muscle aches, or mild fever) and are not able to attend work may be paid through their sick time, as eligible. For employees not allotted sick time benefits, they may be paid under a government benefit program.

Continued Adherence to Public Health Measures

1. All employees are required to continue to practice Public Health measures and workplace procedures to control the spread of COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status.
2. Employees must always adhere to health and safety protocols while in the workplace, including wearing masks, handwashing, physical distancing where possible, and the use of other Personal Protective Equipment as required by their position and task.

Records and Reporting

1. Employees are required to show their proof of vaccination to the Executive Director by the dates indicated in accordance with this policy. The Ontario enhanced vaccine certificate with a QR code (or Province of Ontario equivalent) constitutes proof of full vaccination. A copy of the vaccination certificate can be obtained by logging in to Ontario's portal to download or print at <https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/>.
2. Employees who falsely represent their status of vaccination or test results to avoid workplace safety measures will be held accountable and subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination with cause.

Non-compliance with the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Employees who do not to comply with this vaccination policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination with cause in accordance with all applicable legislation, and SSEA policies and procedures.

Attachments:

- Attachment A- Verification of Truth Statement
- Attachment B- COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption Form



Verification of Truth Statement

I _____, hereby confirm that the facts stated in the vaccination verification document is my own medical information and truthfully represents my medical vaccination status.

Name (print)

Date

Signature

Witness

Date



COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption Form

**The medical exemptions outlined below are derived from National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), the Resource Guide from the Chief Medical Officer of Health's Directive #6 and the guidance documents from the Ministry on Vaccine Information and Special Populations.*

SECTION 1: To be completed by the **staff employed directly by the SSEA (employee) and agency staff**

Name

Employee Position

SECTION 2: To be completed by a **Physician or Nurse Practitioner:**

The above staff member of the **SSEA** requires a medical exemption to the COVID-19 vaccine for the following reason(s):

Severe allergic reactions or anaphylaxis to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or to any of its components.

i. Has your patient been assessed by an allergist/ immunologist to review methods for possible (re)administration of a COVID-19 vaccine. Yes No

ii. If not assessed by an allergist/ immunologist, has the referral been initiated?

Yes No if not please explain why?

Delaying second dose because of a diagnosed episode of myocarditis/pericarditis after receipt of an initial dose of an mRNA vaccine.

For time-limited reasons (e.g., timing around a procedure or other medical treatment).

i. If time-limited, please indicate how long it is expected to last: _____

Thrombosis and thrombocytopenia following vaccination: Patients who have experienced venous or arterial thrombosis with thrombocytopenia following vaccination with a viral vector COVID-19 vaccine should not receive a second dose of a viral vector COVID-19 vaccine.

i. To be re-evaluated on: _____(dd/mm/yyyy)

Other: Based on new and emerging information on medical contraindications of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine (please provide details): _____

Office Stamp:

Health Care Provider Name: _____

Signature of Health Care Provider: _____

Date of Assessment (dd/mm/yy): _____

STAFF CONSENT

By signing this form, I understand the Health Practitioner's assessment and strategies.

I understand that information confirming my exemption (if one is required) will be collected by the SSEA Executive Director and only information confirming my exemption will be shared with my Supervisor/Director at the SSEA.

Employee Signature

Date (dd/mm/yy)

The COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption Form will be filed in the employee's Employee Health File