



# WTP COVID-19 BRIEF:

## Key Information for Workplace and Training Providers: Policies for Fully Vaccinated People

This document provides guidance for workplaces and training facilities regarding policies for people who are fully vaccinated for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Information and recommendations will change over time based on what is known or anticipated about this novel (new) virus. These suggestions are based on federal guidance as of August 2021.

### Overview

Current evidence shows that authorized COVID-19 vaccines protect most people against symptomatic and severe COVID-19 illnesses.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Growing evidence illustrates that fully vaccinated people are much less likely to become infected and less likely to transmit SARS-CoV-2 to others. Research about the impact and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines is ongoing. Therefore, it is important to stay informed about how long vaccine protection lasts and how effective these vaccines are, especially as new variants emerge and the virus changes over time. Evidence suggests fully vaccinated people can become exposed to and infected with the Delta variant, but they are infectious for a much shorter period.<sup>5</sup>

Fully vaccinated people may need additional shots or “boosters” to keep their immunity high. This is often the case for other infectious diseases like hepatitis A and B, measles, and pneumonia, for which additional resources and references are available below.<sup>6</sup>

As the number of fully vaccinated people increases, we can better protect workers from becoming ill with COVID-19. This greatly reduces COVID-19 risks in workplace and training settings, and when encountering colleagues, co-workers, customers, clients, visitors, and the public.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the World Health Organization, people are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19: two weeks or more after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or two weeks or more after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).

### Guiding Principles for Employers and Training Providers

1. Fully vaccinated people have a reduced risk of getting COVID-19.
2. Fully vaccinated people have a reduced risk of transmitting SARS-CoV-2 if they are exposed.
3. Fully vaccinated people can test positive for SARS-CoV-2 if they are exposed, called “breakthrough”, but they are much less likely to experience any symptoms of illness

(e.g., fever, chills, aches, loss of taste or smell, etc.).

4. Multiple interventions should be used concurrently to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Proven interventions against SARS-CoV-2 transmission (beyond vaccination), include using masks consistently and correctly, maximizing ventilation both through dilution and filtration of air, and maintaining physical distance and avoiding crowds. Basic public health measures such as staying home when sick, handwashing, and regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces should also be encouraged.
5. Most work activities pose minimal risk to fully vaccinated people. However, crowded settings such as correctional facilities, meatpacking and processing plants, public transportation, homeless shelters, and K-12 schools pose a greater risk, especially in settings with low vaccination rates.<sup>7,8</sup> In these settings, wearing masks indoors for source control is important regardless of vaccine status. Unvaccinated people, including those with immunocompromising conditions, remain at substantial risk for infection, severe illness, and death,

1 CDC Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People

2 WHO COVID-19 vaccines (who.int)

3 CDC Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination (cdc.gov)

4 National institutes of health (nih.gov) NIH Safety Guidance & COVID-19 Safety Plan for Working Onsite During the Coronavirus Pandemic

5 CDC Delta Variant: What We Know About the Science

6 CDC Immunization Schedules

7 Updated Interim Enforcement Response Plan for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) | Occupational Safety and Health Administration (osha.gov)

8 Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace | Occupational Safety and Health Administration (osha.gov)

especially in areas with high community transmission.

6. In settings where healthcare services are provided, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [COVID-19 Healthcare Emergency Temporary Standard](#) (ETS) applies.<sup>9,10</sup> Issued in June 2021, the ETS addresses employer requirements to protect their workers from exposure to SARS-CoV-2, similar to a standard like [Bloodborne Pathogens](#).<sup>11</sup> The ETS focuses heavily on the need to build effective COVID-19 plans, including personal protective equipment (PPE) use, training, and health screening.
7. Fully vaccinated people can further reduce their risk of infection with the Delta variant and transmission by wearing a mask in public indoor settings, on public transportation, and in areas with substantial or high community transmission.<sup>12,13</sup>
8. Fully vaccinated people who have come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 should be tested 3-5 days following the date of their exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. They should isolate if they test positive.<sup>14</sup> Fully vaccinated people should continue to follow applicable laws, rules, and regulations in their geographic area and in their work and training settings.
9. The risk of getting COVID-19 during travel is less likely for fully vaccinated people, however well-fitted masks should be worn on public transportation including planes, buses, and trains and

in public hubs such as airports and train stations.

## Considerations for Infection Control Plans and Policies

- People traveling into a work or training site do not need to self-quarantine prior to arrival if they have no symptoms and have been fully vaccinated.<sup>15</sup> This may change in response to the level of community transmission in specific geographic areas.
- Fully vaccinated people do not need to do symptom and temperature checks upon arriving to a work or training location. However, individuals should be alert for symptoms and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop. CDC offers guidance on [“What to Do If You Are Sick”](#) which can be provided to workers and trainees.
- Address exemptions for fully vaccinated people without [COVID-like symptoms](#) from routine screening and testing programs if they are in place.
- If there is shared transportation to an off-site setting, clear signage and policies must be in place for mask use. Many settings may not require masks to be used in a building or outside, but may require them to be used during any type of public transport or where people are seated close together (e.g., buses, heavy machinery, etc.).
- Policies that address actions for people who are not fully vaccinated should be in place and clearly communicated prior to anyone entering a facility or work setting. This may include policies for:
  - Masks and voluntary use of respirators (any required respirator use must comply with OSHA’s respiratory protection standard, 29 CFR 1910.134)
  - Physical distancing
  - Symptom screening, temperature monitoring

- Have a policy in place that addresses any worker or trainee that is experiencing COVID-like symptoms regardless of vaccine status.
- Have clear communication regarding the importance of staying away from a work or training setting if someone feels ill.
- Have training in place for employees when and if any policies change or are updated.
- Continue to perform routine surface and shared materials cleaning, regardless of vaccine status of workers or trainees.

## Resources

[CDC Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)

[CDC When You’ve Been Fully Vaccinated](#)

[CDC Domestic Travel During COVID-19](#)

[CDC International Travel During COVID-19](#)

[CDC Immunization Schedules](#)

[CDC Delta Variant: What We Know About the Science](#)

[CDC Science Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2](#)

[NIEHS WTP COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Workers](#)

[NIEHS WTP Key Elements of a Model Workplace Safety and Health COVID-19 Vaccination Program](#)

[NIEHS WTP Injection Safety for COVID-19 Vaccinators & Vaccine Administrators](#)

[NIH COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

[NIH Safety Guidance and COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)

[OSHA Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)

[WHO COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

9 [Federal Register: Occupational Exposure to COVID-19; Emergency Temporary Standard](#)

10 [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#)

11 [1910.1030 - Bloodborne pathogens. | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](#)

12 [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#)

13 [Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](#)

14 [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People | CDC](#)

15 [CDC Domestic Travel During COVID-19](#) and [CDC International Travel During COVID-19](#)