

Our number one focus throughout the pandemic has been ensuring member safety at work, and with that in mind, we encourage everyone to get vaccinated if medically appropriate.

Recently, over 3,000 Oregon AFSCME members completed a survey on the vaccine with nearly 75% of respondents stating they are fully vaccinated. With the Delta variant racing through the nation and roughly 90% of ICU beds in Oregon hospitals filled with COVID19 patients, it is up to all of us to do our part to stop the spread.

We can do that by getting vaccinated and wearing a mask when indoors with people outside our household.

Not vaccinated?
Go to [GetVaccinated.Oregon.Gov](https://www.oregon.gov/Health/GetVaccinated) to find vaccines in your area

VACCINE MANDATES

While the vast majority of our members support vaccination and are already vaccinated, it is unfortunate that the state would want to make vaccination a condition of employment instead of exploring other options. In light of the state's mandate, we will be issuing a demand to bargain over this with the State of Oregon, which is our legal responsibility. This way we can ensure any vaccination requirements meet the needs of our membership and include reasonable accommodations for religious and medical exemptions. We cannot change the mandate rule, we can only bargain the impact.

Based on input from Oregon AFSCME members, our demand to bargain will focus on bargaining the impacts of any vaccine mandates and that the policy works for our members.

VACCINE INCENTIVES

Based on the survey Oregon AFSCME conducted, over 60% of respondents support incentives to encourage folks to get vaccinated, including retroactive incentives for those already vaccinated. A strong majority further support bargaining for a day off the day after receiving the 2nd dose of the vaccine in the event of temporary symptoms.

VACCINE ACCESSIBILITY

In addition to incentives and paid time off to recover from the 2nd dose, Oregon AFSCME members surveyed would be more likely to get vaccinated if there were a clinic at work or get vaccinated if they could do it on paid time. Approval of the vaccine by the FDA is also something many members are waiting for before getting vaccinated, which is expected in October. Employers should be prepared to offer vaccinations to employees on-site immediately following FDA approval.

VACCINE ALTERNATE OPTIONS

In terms of bargaining the impact of the mandate, the Oregon University System contract is a good example of allowing exemptions for medical and religious purposes as well as philosophical reasons. For example, the current definition of religious exemption is very broad: a deeply held spiritual belief. We want to make sure we bargain a clear process for members to use the exemption options we bargain for and regular non-invasive testing.

IF YOU DO HAVE A MEDICAL CONDITION OR SINCERELY HELD RELIGIOUS BELIEF THAT PREVENTS YOU FROM GETTING VACCINATED, CAN THE EMPLOYER CHANGE YOUR JOB?

You can ask for reasonable accommodation. Your employer is required to work with you to find a reasonable accommodation. Determinations of what is reasonable will depend on your job and the level of hardship imposed on your employer. Examples of reasonable accommodations include:

1. Working at a social distance from coworkers or non-employees
2. Working a modified shift
3. Getting periodic COVID-19 tests
4. Teleworking
5. Reassignment



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DELTA VARIANT - OHSU DATA

OHSU experts warn that the Delta variant is overwhelming Oregon's hospitals with over 90% of ICU beds in Oregon filled as of mid-August. The Delta variant is dangerous and the vaccine is the single most effective way to prevent getting sick enough to go to the hospital or dying from COVID-19.

The Delta variant spreads much faster than the original COVID19 among unvaccinated and unmasked people - about 8 people to every infected person which is nearly double the original COVID19 spread rate.

By the end of July, the CDC estimated 80% of new COVID19 cases were caused by the Delta variant.

DID AFSCME KNOW THIS IS COMING?

Quite the opposite, we were surprised by the Governor's announcement and other employers' announcements of mandating without a plan to bargain the impact. We are quickly responding at the State table, Corrections, and at OHSU.

HOW DO I TALK TO MY CO-WORKERS ABOUT GETTING VACCINATED?

We encourage members to talk to one another and really listen to everyone's concerns. Try to share your own personal story about why you are afraid of being exposed - be honest and vulnerable and talk about how a union is a family where we support one another. COVID-19 and the Delta variant are really scary, spreading nearly twice as fast. To keep everyone safe, we need to talk to each other.

I'M TELEWORKING, WHY WOULD I NEED TO COME BACK AND GET VACCINATED?

That's absolutely something we need to bargain over and this will vary depending on the employer and what the current agreement is. Whether you are currently in negotiations or demand to bargain, you can bargain over teleworking. Even those teleworking will be around co-workers periodically.

I'VE HAD COVID-19 AND I'M WORRIED ABOUT GETTING THE DELTA VARIANT AND DON'T HAVE TIME OFF

This is another example of the importance of bargaining the impact of the mandate. For example, we can bargain for an extension of emergency paid sick leave, COVID leave, or EFMLA.

I'M PREGNANT, TRYING TO GET PREGNANT, AND/OR BREASTFEEDING AND I'M CONCERNED ABOUT THE VACCINE IMPACT

We encourage you to talk to your doctor or we can connect you to a union member doctor at OHSU, Multnomah County, or Lane County to talk to you one on one.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC, WE HAD STRICT RULES ON EXPOSURE AND NOW WE DON'T

Another example of why we need to bargain the impact of the mandate. There need to be clear and safe rules around exposure (even if you are vaccinated because of the Delta variant). You can have COVID and be asymptomatic and still spread it. We need to negotiate what happens in all these different scenarios and make sure members are protected and safe and not have to use vacation or personal time as well as communication around exposure and free testing.