

# RISK Alert

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS FOR BOND POLICYHOLDERS.



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Alert Type

Awareness

Watch

Warning

## Requiring Employee Vaccinations?

With the spread of variants of COVID-19, a unique situation has been created for businesses that have begun the transition back to in-person work. Employers are considering whether they should require the vaccinations for their staff.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued guidance stating that employers are allowed to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for in-person employees (barring medical or religious reasons), but it can be a sensitive issue. Credit union leaders should follow key communication fundamentals when sharing their decision about getting vaccinated.

### Details

Under current Federal Equal Employment Opportunity laws, an employer may legally require or incentivize all staff members reporting to a physical workplace to be vaccinated for COVID-19. The exception is employees who opt out of the vaccine for medical or religious reasons, and in these circumstances, employers must provide accommodations compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Employee vaccination can be an important tool in combatting the disease and creating a workplace that feels safe. While employers don't want their employees to feel forced into any decision, you should consider these key communication fundamentals when sharing your decision with employees.

- **Leadership** should announce this level of decision to all employees to ensure message consistency.
- Explain the **reasoning** behind your decision. Frame your decision in terms of business, employee protection, and/or member support.
- Highlight your organization's **values** and remind employees of the steps your organization has taken to keep them safe during the pandemic.
- Lean on **empathy** and for those who may not like the decision. Listen to concerns and offer support but remain firm in implementing the company policy.
- Be clear on the organization's **expectations** for vaccination, timelines, and ramifications for non-compliance.

Even if you're not requiring employee vaccinations or bringing people back into the office, there are still steps you can take to encourage and incentivize your employees to get the vaccine.

No matter what you decide regarding your COVID-19 vaccination policy, it's always wise to consult an employment attorney or HR expert before making any official announcements to your staff.

**Date:** August 24, 2021

**Risk Category:** Workplace Safety; Employee Wellness; Human Resources; Employment Practices

**States:** All

**Share with:**

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- Human Resources
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- People Leaders
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### Facing risk challenges?

[Schedule](#) a free personalized discussion with a Risk Consultant to learn more about managing risk.

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## Examples of Employer Letters

As employers communicate their intent to employees, starting can be difficult. Here are two examples of CEOs making this announcement:

- [Google CEO to employees](#)
- [Tyson Foods CEO to employees](#)

## Risk Mitigation

If you're contemplating or decide to make the COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for employees, consider these risk mitigation tips:

- Be aware of reasonable accommodations and exceptions (such as disability and religious exceptions) allowed for by law.
- You can also ask employees to declare whether or not they've gotten the vaccine and for proof; however, just like any other medical record, employers must keep that information confidential per the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Consider recent court decisions as well as guidance issued by regulatory agencies.
- Work with your legal counsel to make sure any contemplated course of action is in compliance with the law.
- Ensure consistent communications regarding your policy and expectations for vaccination, timelines, and ramifications for non-compliance.

## Risk Prevention Resources

Access CUNA Mutual Group's [Protection Resource Center](#) at [cunamutual.com](#) for exclusive risk and compliance resources to assist with your loss control efforts. The Protection Resource Center requires a User ID and password.

### Employment Practices Risk Management Hub

Designed to help reduce exposure to employee practice liability claims, the insights, resources, model policies / procedures, and training modules at [www.epl-risk.com](#) are exclusively available for CUNA Mutual Group Employment Practices Liability policyholders.

Content on the [epl-risk.com website](#) is developed and maintained by The McCalmon Group, Inc. The McCalmon Group works with some of the largest employers in the world to make workplaces safe, equal and more productive.

If you're not sure how to access...review [Quick Start Registration Guide](#).

In addition, you may want to consider reviewing resources from the [Center for Disease Control and Protection](#) (CDC).



### Access the Protection Resource Center for exclusive resources:

- [Loss Prevention Library](#) for resources & checklists
- [Webinars and Education](#)
- [RISK Alerts Library](#)
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