



Vaccination FAQs for the Private Sector

Updated February 9, 2021

Am I or my business currently eligible for a vaccine?

Maryland will distribute vaccines to five different priority groups based on relative risk of exposure or developing serious illness. We are currently in Phase 1C and the following groups are currently eligible for vaccine:

- All licensed, registered and certified health care providers
- Front line hospital staff
- Nursing home residents and staff
- Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Assisted living, independent living, behavioral health and developmentally disabled group homes and other congregate facilities
- Law enforcement and firefighters, EMS
- Education staff, including K-12 teachers, support staff and daycare providers
- Correctional health care staff and officers
- Public safety workers not covered in Phase 1A
- Health care workers not covered in Phase 1A, including but not limited to lab services, public health, vaccine manufacturing and other health care professions
- Front line judiciary staff
- Continuity of government
- Food/agriculture production, critical manufacturing, U.S. Postal Service, public mass transit, grocery store employees
- Veterinarians and support staff
- Clergy and other essential support for houses of worship
- Adults age 65 and older

Am I or business considered essential? Can you define the categories eligible so far?

Essential businesses and employees are defined by the [Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response \(cisa.gov\)](#). It is important to note that while Maryland follows CISA definitions for essential employees, Maryland makes its own decisions regarding the prioritization of essential employees. Therefore, some employee categories defined as essential by CISA list are not currently eligible to receive vaccines in Maryland. Please refer to item “1” in the list above to review the current priority structure for Phase 1 eligibility.

What kind of documents are being requested to qualify for the shot? Is it self-certified that you are in that Phase?

All COVID-19 vaccine providers shall take reasonable steps to determine if an individual qualifies under Phases 1A-1C and the described priority groups. A COVID-19 vaccine provider may require additional documentation or employee identification and may require that organizations submit institutional plans with identified individuals. For more information, see section seven of the February 4, 2021 [MDH COVID-19 Vaccine Bulletin](#).

At a state-run mass vaccination site, if you are unable to provide documentation, you may be asked to sign an affidavit under penalty of perjury certifying that you are eligible to receive a vaccine and to provide contact information for subsequent follow-up.

Where can employees go to get vaccinated?

To find a vaccination site or clinic near you, visit <http://covidvax.maryland.gov>.

Can my employer require I get vaccinated/Can I require my employees?

The State of Maryland does not have a COVID-19 vaccination mandate. We strongly urge all Marylanders to consider getting vaccinated, as clinically indicated. A private employer may require a COVID-19 vaccination, depending on the terms and conditions of an employee's employment status. A private employer may be able to mandate vaccination but that will be highly dependent on internal policies, procedures, and the status of the person's employment.

Please refer to the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission [here](#).

Should companies register / how to get their essential employees set up to receive the vaccine when it's the correct phase?

At this time, only individuals can register for or schedule an appointment for a vaccination. Vaccinations will be administered based on [priority groups](#) and vaccine availability. To learn more about how the essential workforce is prioritized, see [Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response \(cisa.gov\)](#).

How should a company prioritize its employees?

Businesses should communicate with their employees using the same [priorities as the State](#) -- priorities are based on risk of severe disease and risk of exposure, using guidance from the CDC's [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#). These include age (65 years and older), [medical comorbidities](#), and exposure risk (more frequent [close contact](#) with other employees or the public). Employers may not necessarily know employees' individual risks, due to legal restrictions and privacy rights.

Can businesses request the distribution of vaccinations at my place of employment? Where can they sign up?

Not at the current time. Maryland's limited supply of vaccines from the Federal government does not currently allow this. As the supply improves, we hope to work with our business partners on the widest possible distribution network.

Maryland has surveyed our private sector business partners and based on the survey's results, we intend to use this valuable feedback for recommendations to our state vaccine plan and to structure support and resources for our business community.

Are businesses required to provide leave time for an employee to receive a vaccine?

The [Maryland Healthy Working Families Act](#) allows an employee to use leave for a list of reasons that includes in 3-1305(A)(2) "to obtain preventive medical care for the employee or the employee's family member." Getting a vaccine would fall under this category and would be an acceptable use of MHWFA time. There is not, however, a separate requirement that obligates employers to pay employees for their time to get a vaccine if leave is not available.

Who covers the cost of a vaccine?

Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers will be able to charge an administration fee for giving the shot to someone. Vaccine providers can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Provider Relief Fund. Therefore, employees should not be expected to pay for any part of the vaccination.

I've been vaccinated but my co-workers are not. Do I need to report to work not feeling safe?

We know that everyone in a workplace will not be vaccinated at the same time. As Maryland continues vaccination efforts, it is important to continue practicing simple habits that protect against getting and spreading COVID-19: wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth, wash your hands often, avoid large gatherings, and practice social distancing – keep at least six feet between yourself and others. A substantial proportion of a population must be vaccinated to safely achieve herd immunity against COVID-19. Herd immunity is when a large portion of the population becomes immune to a disease, making its spread much less likely. See the [Governor's order](#) for more information on Maryland' mask requirements.

Do businesses need to disclose who has been vaccinated to other employees?

No. Vaccination status, like other medical information, is protected by [HIPAA](#)

Do employees go by their employer address or their home address when they are trying to identify if they can get the vaccine? Meaning if they live in VA but work in MD, do they qualify under MD mass vaccination state or county requirements?

Individuals who are currently eligible for vaccination based on their occupations should first check with their employers to see if vaccination arrangements have already been made. If not, they should contact the local health department in the localities where they work. These individuals are at high risk of exposure to COVID19 based on where they work.

Will the State require additional training for immunizers?

At this time the state is asking all providers interested in administering the COVID-19 vaccine to please [CDC COVID-19 Training Modules](#)

How can we offer our business resources to assist in the deployment of vaccines?

The State of Maryland will post all announcements for new business opportunities on [eMMA \(electronic Maryland Marketplace Advantage\)](#). If you have not already done so, please register your business on the website. If you have already registered, please continue to monitor eMMA for any announcements or updates. For additional information and assistance on COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Operations & Logistics Capabilities Support email psector@maryland.gov

Where can a business go for the most up to date information pertaining to vaccinations?

<http://covidvax.maryland.gov>

Are Counties Required to be in the phase currently identified by the state?

Vaccines are administered by local officials according to the unique conditions within each jurisdiction, and local leaders have the flexibility to move through priority groups at their own pace. However, in Phase 1C, the elderly and most vulnerable must be prioritized.