

TKO COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY



POLICY UPDATE: In accordance with our *Trailkeeper Code: Safety - Fun - Service*, [TKO's COVID-19 Safety Policy](#) has been updated to take effect over January 2022 to include a vaccination requirement for employees and volunteers with a testing regimen option for those not vaccinated.

PURPOSE: COVID-19 vaccinations significantly reduce risk of transmission. We designed this policy with deep consideration of the importance of individually held rights and beliefs, while also seeking to safeguard the health of our employees, our volunteers, and the communities in which we live and serve. This policy will comply with all applicable laws and is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health authorities. TKO reserves the right to add additional restrictions, e.g., those imposed by a land manager partner.

SCOPE: The term "participant" is used throughout this policy in reference to all employees and volunteers. Any specific requirements or procedures for an employee or volunteer will be referenced in the sections below. If any state or federal land manager declares a vaccination mandate without exemption accommodations (e.g., testing alternatives), TKO will impose those restrictions for participants across all local, state and federal lands.

TIMELINE FOR VOLUNTEERS

- Effective **1/15/2022** - Vaccinated volunteers will be required to provide proof of having received a full course of a COVID-19 vaccine before attending events.
- Effective **1/15/2022** - Non-vaccinated volunteers will need to provide proof of a negative test or take a pause on volunteering. Details on testing can be found in the FAQ section below.
- Volunteers not in compliance with this policy after **January 15th, 2022** will be asked to pause on service until they are fully vaccinated or can provide proof of a negative test before each event.

TIMELINE FOR EMPLOYEES

- On or before **1/15/2022** - All employees are required to confidentially submit an [Affidavit of Vaccination Status](#) along with a copy of official record of full vaccination if vaccinated.
- On or before **1/15/2022** - Non-vaccinated employees will submit a [medical](#) or [religious](#) exemption accommodation form for documentation of a valid medical reason or a sincerely held religious belief.
- **Starting 1/15/2022** - Employees pursuing vaccination or an exemption accommodation must submit weekly proof of a negative COVID-19 test to participate in in-person activities. Noncompliance may result in termination of employment.

PROCEDURES FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

- To submit proof of either vaccination or a negative test result, please use the following secure link for the [TKO Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test Form](#).
- Vaccinated participants (i.e., two shots of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, a single shot of Johnson & Johnson vaccine, or any other FDA-approved vaccines) need submit only once a digital copy of the front side of their [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card](#); originals, copies or photographs are acceptable.
- Non-vaccinated participants must provide a digital copy of a negative [COVID-19 viral test](#) result of either a nucleic acid amplification test (NAATs) 1-3 days prior to the event, OR an Antigen test within 24 hours.
- Before each event, participants must attest to providing proof within the [TKO Volunteer Waiver](#) and verbally confirm before checking into service.

PROCESS FOR STAFF - OFFICE AND AUTOMATION

- Participants are now required to check a box acknowledging the vaccine policy before registering.
- After registration, volunteers without proof on file are automatically sent an email prompting them to complete the form. Verification forms only need to be submitted once per volunteer.
- Staff will not be canceling registrations if a volunteer fails to submit their form before the trail party start date. We need to create buffer space for folks to become familiar with the verification process. We will re-evaluate this decision as time goes on, and welcome feedback.
- Staff are monitoring trail parties regionally and will reach out to volunteers individually (calling if necessary) before the trail party if forms have not been completed. Volunteer-led trail parties will be prioritized.

PROCESS FOR TKO LEADER IN THE FIELD

- We are trying to ensure that most, if not all, volunteers complete their verification forms before going into the field. A majority of participants on upcoming trail parties will have already been verified. It is possible that some volunteers will show up on a trail party without a completed form.
- TKO staff will send out a daily health screen document to see which volunteers have completed verification forms. The crew leader would not need to verify everyone's proof just those indicated in the column called "Proof Verification Needed"
- To review proof in the field, ask to see the volunteer's proof (photo or app screenshot is okay) and verify the following:
 - The name on the proof reasonably matches the name on the roster.
 - Acceptable proof CDC (or healthcare provider) COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card or a valid negative viral test:
 - Vaccination cards date of the final dose in their vaccination series is 14 days or more prior to your trail stewardship event date OR;
 - Participants must submit a digital copy of a negative COVID-19 test result. Viral tests, including nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) 1-3 days prior to an event and antigen tests within 24 hours of an event, are acceptable. NAATs can be submitted weekly for regular participation.
 - At this time, we are asking that proof is reviewed by the yellow hat only. ACLs can support with other tasks while proof is being verified.
 - After reviewing, write down the volunteer's vaccination (or negative test confirmation) date beside their name on the health screen sheet. A TKO staff member will input this information into our database so the volunteer is not prompted to submit proof of vaccination again.
- If a volunteer does not provide proof of vaccination when asked:
 - Say the following (paraphrasing is okay): "I'm sorry, but due to TKO policy and land agency requirements, you cannot join this trail party if you are unable or unwilling to show proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or a negative test."
 - Please feel absolutely free to stress that this is organization and agency policy, not a decision you are making as an individual. Do not feel obligated to respond to any questions or concerns beyond directing them to contact the TKO office.
 - Make a note beside the volunteer's name on the roster as an FYI to TKO staff.
 - Call your regional coordinator if there is an unpleasant or unsafe response. We are behind you!

OUTREACH TO PARTICIPANTS

- Announcement email to stewardship newsletter list.
- Reminder email to anyone registered for a trail party without a completed form on file.
- Announcement posted to the trail stewardship calendar.
- Form links included in trail party reminder emails.
- Additional prompts will be sent to those who have not signed as their trail party date approaches.

TKO COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY FAQs

RESPECTFUL SERVICE AND VACCINE REQUIREMENTS: The decision to implement a vaccine requirement for participants was not an easy one to make and it is why we included an exemption accommodation for a testing regimen. There are many reasons why a person may choose not to receive a vaccine - each person's experience during this pandemic is unique, and reasons for not getting a vaccine or sharing that information is unique too.

TKO follows guidelines established in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), EEOC Title VII, and state law. Participants can request an exemption for medical conditions/disabilities, or sincerely-held religious beliefs. Disrespectful treatment based on a person's decision to receive a vaccination or request an accommodation will not be tolerated. Together, through our individual actions and choices, we need to respect each other's decisions.

Why a vaccination requirement?

- A vaccination requirement supports TKO's safety and public health efforts to reduce severe disease from COVID-19. This requirement also supports efforts to maintain TKO programming and activities across the organization on local, state, and federal lands as land manager restrictions may change.
- Vaccines are proven to be effective at protecting from serious illness, hospitalization, and death. Considering the current and future serious impacts of COVID-19 on individual and community health, we need to do what we can as a public service provider to support local, state, and public lands and trails.

Is a vaccination requirement legal?

Yes, vaccine requirements for participants are legal, both under federal and state laws, for TKO to implement as long as qualified individuals are provided reasonable accommodations for medical conditions, disability, or sincerely-held religious beliefs that prohibit them from receiving a vaccine.

What are sufficient forms of proof of vaccination?

TKO staff members or volunteers must submit a digital copy of the front of their CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card; originals, copies or photographs on a mobile device are acceptable.

Isn't vaccine information protected by law? HIPAA?

HIPAA is a federal law that created standards for how sensitive patient health information is shared. HIPAA eligible entities include health care or plan providers or other entities that act on their behalf for things like claims and billing processes. While TKO is not a covered entity under HIPAA, we are managing participant vaccine information with great care.

How is my vaccine information being handled?

We recognize that many people view vaccine information as private and/or confidential and we are managing participant vaccine information with great care. Vaccine information is maintained in a secure electronic file folder for medical information that has limited access.

Can the vaccine information I provide TKO be shared if someone puts in a public records request?

TKO will keep this information confidential to the extent possible absent authorization from the participant, or if we are directed to disclose from a government agency or court order.

Are vaccine boosters required?

Vaccine boosters are recommended by the CDC, the requirement to receive a booster to keep this vaccination policy up to date shall be updated as certain groups are allowed access to a vaccine booster.

Who is included in the TKO Health Advisory Team?

The TKO Health Advisory Team includes TKO management team members, board members, and crew leaders, some of whom are current or retired medical professionals.

NON-VACCINATED, ACCOMODATIONS TO INCLUDE A TESTING REGIMEN

What are exemption accommodations?

- Any participant, employee or volunteer, may be exempt from vaccination based on a medical condition/disability or for sincerely held religious beliefs that prohibit them from receiving a COVID-19 vaccine(s).
- Philosophical, political, scientific, or sociological objections to vaccination will not be considered as valid grounds for an exemption.
- While exemptions are accepted, TKO is not required to provide exemption accommodations if doing so would pose a direct threat to the exempted individual or others in the trailplace or would create an undue hardship.

What are the possible testing regimens to consider for participants?

- Participants must submit a digital copy of a negative COVID-19 test result.
- Viral tests, including nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) 1-3 days prior to an event and antigen tests within 24 hours of an event, are acceptable.
- NAATs can be submitted weekly for regular participation.

What if a land manager does not allow exemption accommodations?

- TKO will follow the requirements and standards set out by the partnering land manager when we are holding activities on those lands. If a testing regimen is not allowed, TKO participants will be required to be vaccinated to participate in those events.
- If a state or federal agency does not allow testing as an exemption accommodation, TKO will remove the testing regimen as an option for participants.

FAQ: EMPLOYEES

Is paid time available for COVID-19 vaccinations or testing regimens?

- All employees are eligible for paid time to receive a COVID-19 vaccination or testing regimen; please coordinate with your supervisor on your plans.
- Generally, up to four hours is provided to non-exempt or hourly participants and can be given if the vaccination is done during or outside of trail hours. Exempt or salaried participants can adjust their trail schedules to receive a vaccination.

What should I do if I experience symptoms after receiving the vaccine?

The 4 hours of paid time in the vaccine policy is not intended to cover any time away from trail for post-vaccine symptoms you experience. If you experience symptoms, follow guidance provided by the vaccination clinic or medical provider. If you are unable to report to trail, notify your supervisor. COVID-19 paid time off can be used for any absences related to post vaccine symptoms.

I have received the COVID-19 vaccine. What do I need to do?

If you are fully-vaccinated and it has been two weeks after the last dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, a single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, or any other FDA-approved vaccine, then all employees need to do to meet the policy requirements is complete the [Affidavit of Vaccination Status](#) and submit proof through the secure link for the [TKO Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test Form](#) by 1/15/2022.

I got my first vaccine doses but am still waiting for my second shot or booster. What should I do?

If you have not received your second dose or are waiting for a booster, make sure to submit a copy of your vaccine card now, and then again once you get your next vaccination dose. Make sure to complete the online policy review by 1/15/2022 and trail with the TKO Executive Director on how to temporarily shift trail duties until you are fully vaccinated or add a testing regimen.

I am not vaccinated. What do I need to do?

Please complete the [Affidavit of Vaccination Status](#) to indicate your intention to either get vaccinated or submit a [medical](#) or [religious](#) exemption accomodation form for review.

Can participants get an exemption from having to get the vaccine?

- Yes, exemptions may be provided to qualified individuals with an approved exemption request.
- Employees can request an accommodation for medical conditions or disability, or sincerely-held religious belief. Exemption requests will be managed by the TKO Health Advisory Team and with support from contracted Human Resources following requirements established under TKO policies, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), EEOC, Title VII, and state law.

Will people lose their jobs?

- Possibly, if employees:
 - Do not meet these policy requirements and provide vaccine/testing documentation or;
 - Do not submit an exemption request for medical condition or disability or sincerely held religious belief or;
 - A request can not be approved with accomodations from the land manager.
- Anyone who does not meet policy requirements will be put on unpaid status and may face termination of employment.

Does the policy cover booster shots?

- Boosters will likely be added to the vaccine requirement sometime in 2022, but we are not requiring them at this time.
- Right now in Oregon, a larger portion of the population can receive a booster dose to help increase their immunity as long as they received either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.
- As information is provided on each vaccine, the TKO Health Advisory Team will update participants on current requirements under the policy.

If employees do not have information about the vaccination status of colleagues they trail with, how can they make informed decisions about their own personal risk?

It is understandable to have concerns about your personal safety risk while at trail and we should expect our trailsites to take every reasonable measure to be safe. It is also reasonable for participants to have a right to privacy around certain decisions like a vaccine. Please do not ask your colleagues about their vaccination status or make assumptions about their status based on perceived accommodations. There are many reasons someone may be keeping a distance or wearing an N95 mask. If you are concerned about your personal risk, the best thing to do right now is assume that people around you are not vaccinated and take measures to protect yourself such as wearing a high-quality face mask, practicing distancing, and minimizing in-person interactions. If you have concerns at your trailsite, connect with your supervisor.