

Fact sheet: 5 things to know about your WHS duties and COVID-19 vaccines

Like many small business owners, you have worked hard to manage the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at your workplace and meet your work health and safety (WHS) duties.

Here are 5 things you need to know about WHS duties and the COVID-19 vaccines.



1. A COVID-19 vaccine is voluntary and will be available in phases

The Australian Government is committed to providing all Australians with access to free, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. Receiving a vaccination is voluntary.

Australia's COVID-19 vaccines will be available in phases starting with older Australians and high-risk industries. The [Department of Health](#) can provide you with more information about COVID-19 vaccines and the rollout.



2. Keep doing all the things you have been doing to reduce the spread of COVID-19

A vaccine is only one part of keeping the Australian community safe.

You **must** continue to do all that you have been doing in your workplace to stop the spread of COVID-19 including [physical distancing](#), [good hygiene](#), [regular cleaning and maintenance](#) and using [personal protective equipment](#). Continue to make sure your workers do not to attend work if they are unwell.

You must also continue to comply with any [public health orders](#) that apply to you and your workplace.



3. Most small businesses won't need to mandate vaccination to meet their WHS duties

For most small businesses, you don't need to mandate vaccination in your workplace to meet your WHS duties. You can talk to your [WHS regulator](#), employer organisation or other legal service if you are unsure. Don't implement a mandatory vaccination policy without first talking to your workers and seeking advice.



4. Talk to your workers

You and your workers may have questions about the vaccines. Official government sources such as the [Department of Health](#) are the best sources for accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19 vaccines.

Remember, you must also consult with your workers and their health and safety representatives before implementing any WHS changes in your workplace.



5. WHS is not the only thing you need to know about

You may have rights and responsibilities under other laws in relation to COVID-19 vaccines, including workplace relations, anti-discrimination and privacy laws.

Seek advice if you are unsure. For example, for help about what to do if a worker is not vaccinated, talk to your [WHS regulator](#), the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#), your employer organisation or other legal service.

For detailed guidance on WHS and the COVID-19 vaccine, including answers to common questions, go to the [COVID-19 vaccines information on the Safe Work Australia website](#).



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