

# 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.

**For detailed, up to date 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](#).**



**3. Most small businesses won't need to require workers to be vaccinated to meet their WHS duties**

For most small businesses, it is unlikely that a requirement to be vaccinated will be reasonably practicable. 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.