

From the Chief of Defence Force

26 Nov 2021

Today the Government announced COVID-19 vaccine mandates covering the New Zealand Defence Force and NZ Police.

The new mandate covers sworn members, recruits and authorised officers of the Police, and armed forces and civilian staff (including contractors) of the NZDF.

Under the mandate, first doses of the vaccine for unvaccinated staff in both organisations are required by 17 January, and second doses by 1 March.

As you all know the NZDF has been undertaking its own vaccination programme this year for uniformed personnel to ensure the Defence Force is able to do its job. Almost all regular force uniformed personnel are now vaccinated. A large majority of civilian staff have also been vaccinated through this programme.

The announcement today mandates vaccinations for all regular force uniformed personnel, reserves, civilian employees, and contractors of the NZDF.

Considering how blended our workforce is, and the need to keep the force safe and healthy so it can keep operating, these new requirements should come as no surprise.

NZDF capabilities are dependent on the ability of its integrated workforce to be able to respond when required. We need to do everything we can to reduce the risk of outbreaks on our camps and bases, which would endanger our ability to do the job expected of us by the Government.

Further information on how the new mandate will be implemented will be provided when it comes to hand, and no later than 16 December when the mandate comes into force. This mandate does not affect the recent CDF Directive in relation to Auckland Defence Areas.

The Government's announcement can be found on the [Beehive website](#).

Vaccine Boosters

See Chief Medical Officer's [ILP message of 23 Nov 2021](#) here.

Air Marshal Kevin Short
Chief of Defence Force

From the Chief People Officer

09 Dec 2021

You will likely be aware of the Government's announcement of a COVID-19 vaccine mandate applying to the New Zealand Defence Force. This includes Regular Force, Reservists, civilian staff and contractors.

In order to comply with this mandate, the NZDF is required to establish a register of the vaccination status of these members.

We already hold the records for Regular Force, as a requirement of their employment. The simplest way to do this for our other workers, is to utilise their Ministry of Health vaccine records to establish this register.

This is in step with what other organisations, who have workers mandated to be vaccinated are doing.

What does this mean?

We are communicating further details directly to people we need to by email to their personal and work emails held on record.

When you receive this email please read the Privacy Statement included.

You do not need to take any further action, unless you wish to opt out of providing NZDF with your vaccination status.

The Privacy Statement covers in detail what information will be shared, to what to do if you wish to withhold this information, and the steps to follow.

You will need to advise NZDF of this by 5:00pm Sunday, 12 December 2021. Please include your Service Number in your email.

Please engage with your commanders and managers if you have any questions or concerns around your personal circumstances.

Keeping everyone as safe as possible at work, and ensuring the NZDF continues to meet its military outputs means we have to protect our people, preserve our operational capabilities and maintain our ability to respond to contingencies.

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring NZDF can do this and comply with the requirements of the Government's vaccine mandate.

Kind regards,

Helen Cooper
Colonel

Acting Chief People Officer, HQNZDF

NZDF COVID-19 update

16 Dec 2021

Keeping everyone as safe as possible at work, and ensuring the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) continues to meet its military outputs, means we have to protect our people, preserve our operational capabilities and maintain our ability to respond to contingencies.

Vaccination is a key control for reducing the spread and impact of the COVID-19 virus within the workplace and communal areas. A workplace where all people present are vaccinated means that the likelihood of introducing and spreading the virus is reduced.

There are a number of developments affecting the NZDF workplace, and this update provides a summary with links to further information where relevant.

Force Protection Control Measures - from 16 December 2021, Defence Area OIC's are the authority as to whether their location is to adopt 'Baseline', 'Enhanced' or 'High' Force Protection Control Measures. For further information on what this means, see the following links:

- [Update to CDF Directive 25/2021](#) dated 13 Dec 21
- [CDF Dir 25/2021, Sustaining NZDF COVID-19 Preparedness](#)
- [Health Directive 21-016 version 3](#) dated 13 Dec 21

NZDF COVID-19 vaccine mandate - from 17 January 2022, the Government's COVID-19 vaccine mandate will mean all Regular Force, Reservists, civilian staff and contractors will not be permitted to undertake work for NZDF if they have not received their first dose of vaccine or their vaccination status is unknown (unless they meet specific exemption criteria). For further information see the following links:

- [COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate FAQs - Armed Forces \(Regular and Reserve Force\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate FAQs - Civil Staff](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Commanders/Managers Guide - Civil Staff](#)
- [CDF Directive 31/2021, Vaccine Mandate – Members of the Armed Forces](#)
- [CDF Directive 32/2021, Vaccine Mandate – Members of Civil Staff](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate - CPO Admin Instruction 5 2021 for Armed Forces 17 Dec 21](#)
- [COVID-19 Public Health Response \(Specified Work Vaccinations\) Order 2021](#)
- **Restricted access to all Defence Areas** - from 17 January 2022, all visitors must be fully vaccinated, in order to visit NZDF bases (unless they meet specific exemption criteria)
 - [CDF Directive 33/2021, Vaccination Status as an Entry Requirement to Certain Defence Areas](#)
- **Latest CMO Message** – in the latest message, 13 December 2021, the CMO discusses COVID protection over Christmas, returning to work in 2022 and how we do our best to protect COVID-19 from entering the workplace, along with advice if it does.
 - [Latest CMO Message – 13 Dec 21](#)
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- As we approach a new phase of COVID-19 in the community, it is really important that each and every member of the NZDF thinks about the role they play as leaders and as employees and keeps themselves informed and updated.
- Please engage with your commanders and managers if you have any questions or concerns.
- Thank you for your assistance in ensuring NZDF continues to keep everyone as safe as possible at work, and is able to meet its outputs.

COVID-19 vaccine mandate – judicial review

28 Feb 2022

You may be aware that on 15 February 2022 there was a hearing in the High Court to consider an application for Judicial Review of the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Specified Work Vaccinations) Order 2021.

The judicial decision has been released and has overturned the Order, which requires vaccination against COVID-19 for New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel.

As the decision has only just been released, we will be taking time to consider the decision.

In the meantime, termination of employment for civilian staff and discharge from service for Armed Forces personnel will not proceed at this time.

We have communicated this to those directly affected and advised we will be in contact again about next steps shortly.

There are a range of implications that need to be worked through and we will communicate any decisions made as a result of this judgement as soon as we can.

Vaccine mandate Judicial Review

09 Mar 2022

Last week we advised of the recent Judicial Review decision, overturning the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Specified Work Vaccinations) Order 2021 that mandated vaccination against COVID-19 for New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel. Decisions as to whether this will be appealed, lie outside NZDF.

What happens now?

Unless they are a border worker, health worker, or working in Auckland, Commanders/managers will begin to assess and facilitate the transition of unvaccinated members of the NZDF's back to work, (not necessarily the workplace).

Where possible, this will be working from home in the first instance, while a health and safety assessment is conducted. Given the increase in COVID-19, the assessment allows any risks to the unvaccinated member, fellow workers and to operational capability to be identified and evaluated, to ascertain whether a safe return to the workplace can be managed.

For border and health workers – nothing changes. A vaccine mandate remains in place, and workers must be triple vaccinated (two doses, plus the booster) to be able to do that work.

For personnel in Auckland – nothing changes. CDF Directive 26/2021 remains in place and unvaccinated personnel cannot come into defence areas in Auckland.

Judge noted importance of vaccination

The judge went to lengths to clarify that this decision does not question the effectiveness and importance of vaccination. He noted the evidence shows that vaccination significantly improves the prospects of avoiding serious illness and death, even with Omicron variant and confirmed the importance of a booster dose.

Protect yourself and others – get boosted

Congratulations! Just under 99% of our people are double-dose vaccinated. If you haven't yet - please get boosted. We now have cases across all camps and bases, and while we are managing this, getting people boosted is evidenced to reduce transmission and the likelihood of them getting very sick if they do get infected.

Boosters - a baseline readiness requirement

Military personnel are reminded it is a baseline requirement to be triple vaccinated (two doses, plus booster), just like any other required vaccination.

The sooner you get your booster, the better you protect yourself, your whanau and NZDF colleagues.