



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – VOLUNTEERS

COVID-19 Information updated: 1330 hours 12 January 2022

On 17 November 2021, the Chief Health Officer issued the [Fire and Emergency Services Worker \(Restrictions on Access\) Directions \(No 2\) \(The Directions\)](#) under the *Public Health Act 2016*.

Additional Directions [Booster Vaccination \(Restrictions on Access\)](#) were issued on 24 December 2021, and updated on 10 January 2022 – see [Directions \(No 2\)](#).

These Directions specify COVID-19 vaccination requirements on fire and emergency services workers (FES workers, the definition of which includes volunteers) before they can access fire and emergency services sites. Please see [Schedule 1](#) of the Fire and Emergency Services Worker (Restriction on Access) Directions (No 2) for a full list of people who are defined as fire and emergency services workers.

These measures have been put in place to address the risks posed by COVID-19 and the close interactions that FES workers have with vulnerable groups and the general community to limit the spread of COVID-19 and ensure that we can continue to provide critical services to the community.

The Directions (No 2) mean that all volunteers need to have received their first vaccination by 31 December 2021 and be fully vaccinated by 31 January 2022, if they wish to enter a fire and emergency services site.

In addition, volunteers who are eligible to receive a booster vaccination at the commencement of the Booster Vaccination Direction, must receive their booster by 5 February 2022.

Those who become eligible to receive a booster vaccination after 24 December 2021, must receive a booster dose within one calendar month of becoming eligible – if they wish to enter a fire and emergency services site.

To provide further assistance DFES has developed a series of responses to Frequently Asked Questions. These will be updated regularly as required.

1. Am I required to be vaccinated?

Yes. The [Directions \(No 2\)](#) from the Chief Health Officer restricts access to fire and emergency services sites by all people who are not vaccinated against COVID-19.

In addition, you are required to receive a COVID-19 booster dose in line with the [Booster Vaccination \(Restriction to Access\) Directions](#) – if you wish to access a fire and emergency service site (see Q.7).



2. Why is a booster needed if I have already had two doses of COVID-19 vaccine?

A booster dose increases your protection against infection with the virus that causes COVID-19, makes you less likely to get infected and mildly sick, reduces the severity of the disease and lessens the chances of dying from COVID-19.

A booster dose also helps prevent the spread of the virus and leads to a less severe bout of COVID-19, should you be infected. A booster dose will continue to protect you, your loved ones, and your community against COVID-19.

3. Who is eligible for a COVID-19 booster dose?

From 4 January 2022, Western Australians who are 18 years and older and have received their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine more than four months ago, are now eligible to receive a booster dose.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is not currently recommending booster doses for people aged under 18.

4. How do I know when my last dose of my primary course of vaccination was?

You can check your immunisation record or COVID-19 vaccination certificate for the date of your second vaccination dose.

You may also be contacted through SMS, email or letter to let you know you are eligible for a booster vaccination based on the time since your last primary course dose.

5. Will I have to pay for a booster vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines, including booster doses, are free for everyone in Australia. Your Medicare or visa status does not matter – you can still get a free COVID-19 vaccination, including a booster dose.

6. Why has my first dose been replaced on my vaccination certificate?

If you've had a booster dose, only your last two COVID-19 vaccinations will show on your digital certificate.

You are still considered fully vaccinated and although your first dose will no longer appear on your digital certificate, all your COVID-19 vaccinations (including your first dose) are recorded on your Immunisation History Statement.

7. What is a fire and emergency services site?

The directions define a fire and emergency services site as:

- A fire or emergency service incident area
- DFES premises
- Volunteer brigade, group, or unit premises (including a vehicle, vessel, or aircraft)
- Local government premises
- DBCA premises.



8. Why am I required to be vaccinated to enter a fire and emergency services site?

FES workers are at high risk of exposure to COVID-19 and represent an essential workforce for which the Chief Health Officer considers vaccination is justified on public health grounds.

Due to the critical role FES workers play in responding to life-threatening situations, our exposure to the broader community and our interactions with vulnerable communities, COVID-19 has the potential to cause serious illness in volunteers, your families, and members of the community if unvaccinated.

9. When do I have to be vaccinated by?

You must have received your first vaccination dose by 31 December 2021 and your second dose by 31 January 2022. Eligible volunteers must receive a booster vaccination by 5 February 2022. Those who become eligible after 24 December 2021, must receive a booster vaccination within one calendar month of becoming eligible.

10. How can I get a vaccination?

You can get vaccinated at State-run COVID-19 clinics, at participating GP respiratory clinics, pharmacies, or Aboriginal Medical Services. For more information please visit [Roll up for WA](#).

11. Why do I need to provide evidence that I am vaccinated?

Under the [Directions](#), FES workers, which includes volunteers, are required to provide evidence of vaccination in the form approved by the Chief Health Officer.

DFES is required under the Directions to collect and maintain a record of the vaccination status of DFES staff and volunteers. Unvaccinated personnel are restricted from entering fire and emergency services sites.

Local Governments are responsible for establishing and maintaining Bush Fire Brigades under the *Bush Fires Act 1954* and are required to collect and maintain a record of the vaccination status of Bush Fire Brigade volunteers.

12. How can I provide evidence that I am vaccinated?

The Chief Health Officer has approved an Australian Government COVID-19 vaccination digital certificate, or your Immunisation History Statement, as [evidence of your vaccination](#).

DFES volunteers must provide evidence of the vaccination status to DFES using any of the options below.

Bush Fire Brigade volunteers must provide evidence of their vaccination status to their Local Governments. Alternatively, Bush Fire Brigade volunteers can provide evidence to DFES using any of the options below:

- a) **Upload** your certificate on the [Volunteer Hub](#). The Hub is a secure site and once complete, your vaccination status will be visible in your personal profile. If you are a first-time user please contact your nearest regional office for assistance with access



or registration. If selecting the upload option, please use these compatible web browsers: Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, and Apple Safari.

- b) **Email** a PDF copy of your certificate to covidcert@dfes.wa.gov.au. To ensure your certificate is processed you must include:
- Your full name
 - Volunteer ID number
 - Name of your Brigade, Group or Unit.

Once processed, your vaccination status will be visible on your personal profile in the Volunteer Hub.

- c) **In person.** Take a copy of your certificate to your nearest regional office; or provide a copy to your DFES Supervisor or Local Government. Your Brigade, Group or Unit may coordinate a collection on behalf of your team. See your BGU leader(s) to see if this option is available to you.

Important: When obtaining your certificate from the MyGov / Medicare site, please save the PDF and store in a location easily accessible to you.

13. I am a Bush Fire Brigade volunteer and have provided evidence to my Local Government. Will they give that information to DFES?

As unvaccinated FES workers – including Bush Fire Brigade volunteers – are restricted from entering fire and emergency services sites, Local Governments are providing DFES with a list of Bush Fire Brigade volunteers who have been vaccinated.

No additional details other than your name and vaccination status is shared. Vaccination certificates are not distributed or shared with anyone.

14. I have been vaccinated but haven't had time to send my evidence to DFES or Local Government. Can I still attend an incident?

Yes, however you will be required to provide evidence of your vaccination. If you do not have your certificate or refuse to present it upon entry, you will not be allowed to remain at the fire and emergency site. This applies to all FES workers, including Bush Fire Brigade volunteers, and contractors.

15. Does my brigade, group or unit leader have the authority to refuse access to fire and emergency services sites to unvaccinated volunteers?

Yes. The [Fire and Emergency Services Worker \(Restrictions on Access\) Directions \(No 2\)](#) state that the person in charge of a fire and emergency service worker must only roster on, or otherwise permit to work at the fire and emergency services site, a fire and emergency service worker who is vaccinated or is an exempt person.

16. Are new volunteers required to provide a vaccination certificate with their application form?

Yes. All new volunteers must provide evidence of their vaccination against COVID-19 with their application. Once the volunteer is registered, they can upload their evidence



to the Volunteer Hub. The [volunteer recruitment website](#) has been updated to reflect the vaccination requirement.

17. What if I have received a vaccination but don't have a MyGov account?

You can still obtain evidence of your COVID-19 vaccination by calling 1800 653 809 (National COVID Hotline) to request a copy of your certificate.

Important: This can take up to 10 working days to complete.

18. Can I confirm that DFES have received my vaccination status?

Yes, you can go on to the [Volunteer Hub](#) and click on "My Profile" on the top right-hand side. This will list all your personal details, including your vaccination status. It is a good opportunity to see if any of your details need to be updated at the same time.

My Profile

Home > My Profile

My Latest Incidents

See my incidents >

My Service History

See my service history >

On this page

- My Details >
- My Service History >
- My Incidents >
- My Training >
- My Awards >

My Details

Name	
Date of Birth	
Volunteer Number	
BGU(s)	
Occupation	
Drivers Licence	
Personal Email	
Phone	
Residential Address	
Emergency Contact	
Language Spoken	
Other Information	
Ethnic Background	
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
Working with Children Check	
Vaccine Type	COVID-19 Vaccination 2 doses (Fully vaccinated)
Vaccine Date	09/09/2021

My Support

- Grievances
- Health and Safety
- IT and Technical Support
- More

My Toolboxes

- BGU Junior Cadet Program
- Administration
- Assets and Logistics
- More

My Systems

- eAcademy 2.0
- eAcademy for Supervisors and Administrators
- AVL
- More



19. How do I get access to the Volunteer Hub?

If you do not currently have access to the [Volunteer Hub](#), or you have forgotten your password, contact your Volunteer Management Support Officer in your regional office.

20. I have had my first vaccination dose but won't be able to get my second dose before 31 January. Can I still volunteer after 31 January 2022?

Not unless you have a valid exemption from the Chief Health Officer.

If you are unable to get the vaccination for other than medical reasons, for example you can't get an appointment, you will not be able to attend a fire and emergency services site after 31 January 2022 until you provide evidence of your second vaccination or exemption.

21. What happens if I do not provide vaccination evidence?

If you do not provide your vaccination evidence by the due date, it will be presumed that you are unvaccinated, therefore you will be subject to the same restrictions as an unvaccinated person. This means you will not be able to attend a fire and emergency services site until you provide evidence of your vaccination or exemption.

22. What if I choose not to be vaccinated?

Unfortunately, you will not be able to undertake any part of your volunteering role that requires you to enter a fire and emergency services site after 31 December 2021.

Failure to comply with the [directions](#), without reasonable excuse, is an offence and may result in fines to the individual.

23. Can I be exempted from getting the vaccine?

Permanent and temporary exemptions are available on medical grounds from the the Chief Health Officer. Refer to the [directions](#) website for application form and guidelines.

Further information on the exemption process can be found in the [Department of Health's Mandatory Vaccination FAQs](#).

Please note: The exemption process can take up to 7 working days to complete. To avoid needing an additional temporary exemption, please submit your application at the earliest opportunity.

24. I have received an exemption. Why do I have to provide evidence?

Under the [Directions](#), FES workers, which includes volunteers, are required to provide evidence of exemption in the form approved by the Chief Health Officer.

DFES is required under the Directions to collect and maintain a record of the exemption of DFES staff and volunteers. Local Governments are required to collect and maintain a record of the exemption for Bush Fire Brigade volunteers.

Important: To ensure both DFES and Local Governments are complying with the Directions, a list of volunteers who have been granted an exemption will be shared between DFES and Local Governments.



No additional details other than your name and exemption status is shared. Exemption certificates are not distributed or shared with anyone. See Question 12 for submission options.

25. I have received an exemption. Are there any other infection prevention controls in place that I need to follow before entering a fire and emergency services site?

The medical advice provided to DFES indicates unvaccinated persons may have an increased risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19. To ensure the health and safety of you and others operating close to you, additional protection measures may be put in place to reduce the risk of acquiring or transmitting COVID-19.

Individual Exempt Person Management Plans will be developed for anyone who receives an exemption which will detail requirements for you to follow while at a fire and emergency service site.

For more information please contact DFES at covid19@dfes.wa.gov.au, your Local Government or your medical practitioner for advice on the best protection measures.

26. Can I wait until Novavax is available to me?

Novavax is not yet approved for use in Australia. Therefore if you choose to wait for Novavax vaccine, after 31 December 2021 you will be considered unvaccinated and will not be allowed to enter or remain at fire and emergency sites.

Failure to comply with the [directions](#), without reasonable excuse, is an offence which may result in fines to the individual.

27. Does Section 8c of the Fire and Emergency Services Worker (Restrictions on Access) Directions (No 2) mean an unvaccinated volunteer can respond to emergencies where vaccinated persons are not available?

Section 8c is a standard clause that exists in all directions to allow for the provision of immediate assistance in an emergency ONLY when there is no fully, or partially vaccinated person able to render assistance.

Section 8c of the Directions provides for absolute worst-case scenario situations where there is no other option than to have unvaccinated individuals respond.

For example: Two farmers come across a fire that appears to have just started on a verge and is heading toward bushland. There is no-one else around and they are both unvaccinated. This does not prevent them from providing an immediate emergency response.

When the local fire Brigade turns out, the Captain will assess the incident and determine resources required. If it is his/her opinion that to manage the incident the unvaccinated volunteers are needed, then it would be acceptable to keep the unvaccinated volunteers to assist until the incident can be controlled by additional vaccinated brigade members.



28. Can I respond to fire incidents on my own property?

Yes. If there is a fire on your property you can take action to extinguish it, however you should always notify emergency services by calling triple zero (000).

29. Will the directions apply to contractors?

Yes, the [directions](#) apply to contractors working at fire and emergency services sites. All DFES contractors have been made aware of their obligations under the Directions (No 2) and Booster Vaccination (Restriction on Access) Directions.

30. Will visitors (including family members and the local community) be allowed to access fire and emergency sites?

This will depend on the public health risk posed at the time and in line with Health Directions.

At this stage, the Directions (No 2) do not extend to visitors, however any person accessing DFES-managed fire and emergency sites is required to adhere to the DFES [Infection Prevention and Control \(COVID-19\) Procedure](#) and may be required to comply with additional reasonable transmission-based precautions.

31. What is the lifespan of the Directions?

The Directions were issued under the Public Health Act by the Chief Health Officer and are not aligned to the current State of Emergency declaration. The Directions will remain in place until the Chief Health Officer indicates otherwise.

32. Where can I get more information?

You can access the [Volunteer Hub](#) for all the latest information. This includes information regarding the directions and how to provide proof of your vaccination status. Further information can be found below:

- [Mandatory vaccination frequently asked questions](#) (Department of Health).
- [Getting proof of vaccination.](#)
- [Fire and Emergency Services Worker \(Restrictions on Access\) Directions \(No 2\)](#)
- [Booster Vaccination \(Restriction on Access\) Directions \(No 2\)](#)
- [Roll up for WA.](#)

33. What if I have more questions?

These frequently asked questions will be regularly updated as the situation develops, however further questions can be emailed to covid19@dfes.wa.gov.au.