



COVID-19 brigade, group and unit leader guide

Following up on vaccination status

Introduction

On 17 November 2021, the Chief Health Officer issued the [Fire and Emergency Services Worker \(Restrictions on Access\) Directions \(2\)](#) under the Public Health Act 2016 (the Directions). The Directions 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.

DFES is working to collect evidence of vaccination status from volunteers and to ensure we offer all volunteers every opportunity to fulfil their obligation a range of ways to provide the information have been developed. All options being offered by DFES are available to all volunteers across the State.

Important

- You are not being asked to direct any volunteers to receive a vaccination.
- You are instead encouraging volunteers at your location to use one of the options offered to provide evidence of their vaccination status.
- All volunteers are encouraged to review the [FAQs](#) on the Volunteer Hub. They are updated regularly so it is worth checking back before any meetings or conversations with your volunteer team.

Options

It is important to acknowledge the many volunteers who have already shared their vaccination evidence and thank them. For those volunteers who are yet to they can use one of these four options:

1. Upload your Vaccination Certificate (PDF document) or first vaccine dose information on the [Volunteer Hub](#).
2. Send an email to COVIDCERT@dfes.wa.gov.au with your Vaccination Certificate (PDF document or JPG image), full name, Volunteer ID, brigade, group or unit name and best contact number.
3. DFES Staff can sight your Vaccination Certificate - talk to them about how you can do this by contacting your DFES Regional Office Team.
4. Brigade, group, or unit leader collection - an optional process at the discretion of leaders and teams. Information for how to manage this process is available from your DFES Regional Office Team.

Key Contacts

- DFES Regional Office Team, DFES Manager.
- Questions about the Directions: COVID19@dfes.wa.gov.au
- Wellbeing and mental health: wellness@dfes.wa.gov.au

Possible question or circumstances	Brigade, group or unit leader	DFES Regional Office Team or DFES Manager	Other information
A volunteer in my team has told me verbally they are vaccinated but haven't yet uploaded or provided their certificate.	<p>It's important for the volunteer to understand that until DFES receive the required evidence – being their Digital COVID-19 Certificate or their Immunisation History Statement – they will be considered unvaccinated.</p> <p>From 1 January 2022 those that have not provided evidence of vaccination will not be permitted to enter or remain at a Fire and Emergency Services site. This includes responding to DFES incidents. Remind them of the ways they can share the information.</p>	If the volunteer needs any extra help, please refer them on to the regional team who can assist with things like Volunteer Hub registration.	Handy tip * If access to this information is a barrier for any volunteers at your location all pharmacies and GPs can print out individual Immunisation History Statements from Medicare and give advice about COVID-19 certificates.

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A volunteer at my location has said that they do not intend to be vaccinated now for personal or medical reasons.	<p>You are not being asked to direct any volunteers to receive a vaccination.</p> <p>We encourage volunteers to opt for a Leave of Absence, giving them the opportunity to change their decision in time, if they choose.</p>	If the volunteer wants to talk more about the implications of not getting vaccinated or providing evidence of the vaccination for their volunteering role, please encourage them to contact the Regional Team or direct them to their DFES Manager.	Volunteers can also address any questions or thoughts about the Directions by email to COVID19@dfes.wa.gov.au .
A volunteer at my location has said that they do not ever intend to be vaccinated	<p>Pending agreement from the brigade, group or unit leadership team it may be possible for volunteers to temporarily undertake their role remotely until a later date.</p>	Volunteers who wish to take a Leave of Absence may wish to inform Regional Teams or their DFES Manager directly, in which case they can action any necessary administrative updates.	A Leave of Absence allows volunteers the option of returning to their role if they choose to be vaccinated later.
A volunteer at my location has informed me of their intention to resign or take a Leave of Absence.	<p>If people wish to end their volunteer role, we respect their decision and thank them very much for their service. Per individual brigade, group or unit rules or constitution provide advice to the volunteer of the process to follow for formal notice of intent to resign.</p> <p>All administrative duties are undertaken as normal.</p>		Operating remotely is not on demand. Unless the leadership group or circumstances allow for it, a volunteer cannot decide this for themselves.

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<p>I have some strong personalities within my team, and the topic of vaccination can be divisive.</p> <p>How do I deal with these difficult situations and conversations in general?</p>	<p>No matter a person's view or belief on any matter – all volunteers must abide by the DFES (or own local government) Code of Conduct.</p> <p>At times, this may to be reminded.</p> <p>In terms of dealing with COVID-19 and mandatory vaccination, keep the conversations to the requirements of the Directions. That is – regardless of opinion the Directions state, to volunteer, we must be vaccinated, and we must provide proof of vaccination.</p> <p>Listen, acknowledge, and be supportive but remain on task by keeping to facts.</p>	<p>Provide immediate support to brigades, groups and units and intervene as required so these situations are not left to be managed by volunteers.</p> <p>For additional assistance contact DFES Professional Standards for guidance.</p> <p>Deliver any remedial actions to the involved persons directly. Continue to monitor and follow up.</p>	<p>You do not have to deal with this on your own. These situations can be intimidating or confronting.</p> <p>Seek support from your nearest DFES member or office to request assistance.</p>

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<p>A volunteer at my location has advised they do not intend to abide by the Directions and will ignore the advice about entering a Fire and Emergency Services site come 1 January 2022.</p>	<p>This action can be confronting for any leaders and teams. Try to talk with the volunteer. Remind them the Directions placed on DFES are lawful orders issued not by DFES, but by the Chief Health Officer.</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>If you feel the volunteer is likely to place you or your team in this position, notify your DFES Manager at the earliest opportunity to ask for assistance.</p> <p>Should you be concerned the volunteer is acting aggressively or may be volatile, speak with your DFES Manager immediately.</p>	<p>Upon request from the brigade, group or unit leader(s), speak with the volunteer directly to reaffirm the position of the Directions.</p> <p>Advise the volunteer of the ramifications of ignoring or refusing the advice which can include disciplinary action, or in the more extreme case a fine issued by Police.</p>	<p>Understanding the specific reason why the volunteer has these intentions will assist in how it is dealt with.</p> <p>Should the volunteer require additional time to acknowledge these measures, a temporary leave of absence may assist.</p>

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The question I've been asked hasn't been covered here	<p>It's okay to say that you don't know the answer.</p> <p>FAQs provide the answer to many of the recurring questions volunteers have and regional teams are on standby to help.</p>	Regional Teams and your DFES Manager are available to support you and the volunteers in your team to work through this process.	