



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
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August 13, 2021

United States District Court for the District of Maryland COVID-19 Vaccine Policy

The United States District Court for the District of Maryland has imposed a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for the employees in the District. The mandate is effective immediately although the policy allows employees a brief time-period within which to come into compliance. The policy allows employees with medical and religious exemptions to comply by participating in twice-weekly virus testing.

A memorandum from Chief Judge James K. Bredar outlining the District's policy is attached.

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

CHAMBERS OF
JAMES K. BREDAR
Chief Judge

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August 13, 2021

TO: ALL EMPLOYEES, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

FROM: CHIEF JUDGE BREDAR

DATE: AUGUST 13, 2021

SUBJECT: MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINATION

Your safety, and that of the public, are among my highest priorities as Chief Judge. Each of us has the responsibility to ensure our own safety and that of colleagues, the public, lawyers, other partners in the justice system, and those individuals who are compelled to come to Court each day. Accordingly, our Court will now take certain steps to act on that responsibility. In the immediate future, all employees of the U.S. District Court, Bankruptcy Court, and Probation and Pretrial Services Office for the District of Maryland will be required to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus.

The vaccination requirement will be implemented in two stages. For the duration of the period during which no vaccine has received full and final approval by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), employees will have the option of demonstrating that they have been fully vaccinated or presenting proof that they have been tested twice weekly and found not to be carrying the COVID-19 virus. Those electing to be tested in lieu of vaccination will be prohibited from work-related travel.

Upon the FDA giving full and final approval to at least one vaccine that is widely available, an event that I expect to occur within the next month, all employees will be required to be fully vaccinated, or to be in the process of becoming fully vaccinated. After the FDA gives full approval to at least one of the vaccines, employees will no longer have the option of undergoing testing to avoid the vaccination requirement.

Employees may seek exemption from the vaccination requirement on the grounds of a specific medical condition or a sincerely held religious belief. Employees granted exemptions will

August 13, 2021

Page 2

be required to test weekly and, while in the Courthouses and Probation Offices, always wear a mask and maintain social distance.

As you know, the Court is not alone in imposing a vaccination requirement. Several courts across the country have announced similar policies in recent weeks, and many local employers and institutions are also adopting mandatory vaccination policies. Governor Hogan recently announced vaccination requirements for some State employees. The University of Maryland is requiring all students, faculty, and staff at all 12 of its college campuses to be vaccinated before the Fall semester begins. Maryland's largest hospitals and health systems, including the University of Maryland Medical System and Johns Hopkins Medicine, are requiring employees to receive vaccinations as a condition of employment.

As I have noted previously, I am proud to work in a community of such dedicated public servants. You have performed magnificently during the pandemic, allowing us to keep the Court open and honor the promise that citizens will have unfettered access to the justice process. I know that some of you have concerns about the safety of the vaccines and the appropriateness of your being vaccinated given your specific circumstances. If you remain hesitant, I encourage you to consult with your personal medical provider to discuss the safety and risks of the vaccine for you, your family, and your co-workers. You may also review information and materials about the vaccines [here](#).

Each employee working in the District Court, Bankruptcy Court, and Probation and Pretrial Services Office will be asked to complete a form attesting to their vaccination status. Attached to this Memo, please find additional information and instructions on how to comply with this policy. Please review these instructions and the form carefully. Please complete and submit the form promptly.

Finally, thank you for your continued service during the pandemic. Vaccination is the key to beating COVID-19, and beat it we must if this Court is to continue to meet its Constitutional responsibilities. Thank you for joining me in insuring our continued health and safety.