



TOWNSHIP OF EDWARDSBURGH CARDINAL ACTION ITEM

Committee: Committee of the Whole – Administration & Finance

Date: January 10, 2022

Department: Administration

Topic: Vaccination Policy Review and Update

Purpose: To review and update the policy to add clarity to the policy in specific areas.

Background: The Township passed Bylaw 2021-57, a Bylaw to adopt a COVID-19 vaccination policy. The policy included a clause indicating review on a regular basis and reserving the right to modify its contents at any time, based on current available public health information and recommendations, any further legislative amendments, and operational requirements.

In light of the Omicron variant and further potential impact to the employees and employer, the vaccine requirement and testing protocols for non-vaccinated or partially vaccinated are two areas of the policy that need additional clarification.

Vaccine Requirement

The policy is clear that the Township strongly encourages and recommends that all staff become vaccinated, consistent with public health recommendations. However, the policy is not clear on whether being fully vaccinated is a requirement to remain in the workplace. If this is the intent, the policy needs to be modified to provide a specific timeline to receive the vaccination and the outcome (ex. unpaid leave) for non-compliance.

Non-Vaccinated or Partial Vaccinated Testing Protocol

The policy is clear on the requirement to complete regular rapid antigen testing, at a minimum interval and the flexibility to increase frequency. However, the policy is not fully clear on who covers the cost of the testing. The position taken currently by the employer is the cost of the regular rapid antigen testing is borne by the employee for non-Code related reasons. The position is based on the fact that the employee has the ability but is refusing to obtain an additional layer of safety protection. This position is being challenged by the union who feels that the employer should reimburse the cost of any required rapid antigen testing or make test kits available at no charge to employees, regardless of vaccination status, in an effort to accommodate all employees in ensuring a safe workplace.

Policy Implications: Employees with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are required to stay home and isolate if fully vaccinated along with other household members, [for 5 days](#) and with symptoms improving. If not fully vaccinated or if immune compromised then they must isolate for 10 days.

Financial Considerations: It can cost an employee up to \$40.00 to secure and complete a single rapid antigen test. Currently, the employer does have the ability to obtain a box of 25 rapid antigen test for a \$14.00 handling fee. It's unknown at this time when testing may no longer be a requirement and how long the employer will be able to receive the tests through the Province at this reduced cost.

Alternative:

Revise the Vaccination Policy to mandate Covid-19 Vaccinations by a certain date for all employees excluding Code related exemptions. The Township would cover the cost of or supply the rapid antigen testing leading up to the required date.

Recommendation: That Committee recommends that Council update the Township Vaccination Policy to require daily workday testing for non-vaccinated employees and that employer cover the cost of or supply the rapid antigen testing.



CAO