

Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 Vaccination requirements for Police employees

What are the vaccination requirements for Police workers?

The Emergency Management (South Australia Police Workers Vaccination) (COVID-19) Direction 2021 requires that:

From 15 November 2021, a police worker must not engage in work or perform duties of a police worker from unless:

- the police worker has received at least one dose of a Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved COVID-19 vaccine; and
- the police worker has received, or has evidence of a booking to receive, a second dose of a TGA approved COVID-19 vaccine within the interval after the first dose recommended by the ATAGI for that COVID-19 vaccine

The ATAGI clinical guidance on COVID-19 vaccine is available at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-atagi-clinical-guidance-on-covid-19-vaccine-in-australia-in-2021>.

What is the purpose of the Emergency Management (South Australia Police Workers Vaccination) (COVID-19) Direction 2021?

The purpose of this direction is to:

- maintain the provision of police services operating in the State of South Australia despite the presence of COVID-19 in the community;
- minimise the disruption to those services due to the spread of COVID-19 amongst police workers;
- minimise the disruption to those services due to police workers being furloughed following possible exposure to COVID-19; and
- reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 by police workers to vulnerable members of the community.

Who does the Emergency Management (South Australia Police Workers Vaccination) (COVID-19) Direction 2021 apply to?

This applies to:

- persons appointed under the *Police Act 1998*
- public sector employees of the South Australian Police Department employed under the *Public Sector Act 2009* or any other Act
- persons appointed under the *Protective Security Act 2007*
- contractors engaging in work or performing duties at a South Australia Police setting
- volunteers engaging in work or performing duties for South Australia Police or the South Australian Police Department.



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What does a South Australia Police setting mean?

South Australia Police setting means—

- a police station; and
- a police custodial facility; and
- any other premises controlled by the South Australia Police or the South Australian Police Department (for example a premises owned or leased by or on behalf of the South Australia Police).

Who do I need provide proof of my vaccination to if requested?

Upon request, a police worker must provide the officer in charge or delegate of the South Australia Police setting with proof of their vaccination status.

What happens if I don't get vaccinated?

All police workers must comply with the *Emergency Management (South Australia Police Workers Vaccination) (COVID-19) Direction 2021*. If you don't receive a COVID-19 vaccination by 15 November 2021, you may not attend any SAPOL workplace unless you have an approved medical exemption. If you choose not to get vaccinated against COVID-19, you will be required to take accrued leave or special leave without pay until you can comply with the vaccination requirements.

I only come into a Police setting occasionally. Do I need to meet the vaccination requirement?

If you are a police worker you are required to be vaccinated, however if you are person that is a contractor engaging in work or performing duties at a South Australia Police setting on a single occasion or on an infrequent and irregular basis, you are not required to meet the vaccination requirements.

Are victims or people reporting crimes required to be vaccinated?

No, only police workers are required to be vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccines

What does ATAGI mean?

ATAGI means the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation.

Have the vaccines been properly reviewed by regulatory agencies?

All vaccines available in Australia are approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for safety, quality, and effectiveness. COVID-19 vaccines must meet the same high standards as any other vaccine approved for use in Australia.

Which vaccine do I need to have?

People must be vaccinated against COVID-19 with a TGA approved vaccine including either AstraZeneca, Pfizer or Moderna.



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Can I get vaccinated during work time?

Yes, SAPOL employees can get vaccinated during working hours, however, you will need to negotiate this with your line manager.

COVID-19 Vaccination requirements for Police employees in healthcare settings

As a Police employee what are my vaccination requirements to enter healthcare settings?

The Emergency Management (Healthcare Setting Workers Vaccination No 2) (COVID-19) Direction 2021 issued under the Emergency Management Act 2004, places COVID-19 vaccination requirements on all persons working in a South Australian healthcare setting.

Phase 1

Police employees engaging in work or duties in the following healthcare settings must be vaccinated against COVID-19 with a TGA approved vaccine, with the first dose being **completed by 1 November 2021**, and the second dose being completed within the interval recommended by ATAGI:

- public and private hospitals*;
- an ambulance service (including an ambulance service for transporting patients).

Phase 2

Police employees engaging in work or duties in the following healthcare settings must be vaccinated against COVID-19 with a TGA approved vaccine, with the first dose being **completed by 8 November 2021**, and the second dose being completed within the interval recommended by ATAGI:

- primary community healthcare facilities (including general practice clinics, dental clinics, private nurse offices);
- pharmacies;
- specialist outpatient facilities;
- private pathology centres;
- private radiology centres (including breast screening centre);
- defence health settings (including Garrison health centres, deployed and exercise health support and clinical health training);
- facilities for the collection, manufacture and distribution of blood and biological products;
- Aboriginal community controlled health services;
- any location where the Department for Health and Wellbeing, the Commission on Excellence and Innovation in Health and Wellbeing SA.

What if I am unvaccinated and need to attend an emergency situation at a healthcare setting. Can I enter?

Yes, if you are attending an emergency situation at a healthcare setting you are not required to be vaccinated.



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What is the definition of specialist outpatient facilities?

Specialist outpatient facilities means consulting suites of private medical specialists (including reproductive services) and any setting where the following services are provided by allied and scientific professionals in person to another person:

- art or music therapy;
- audiology;
- dental therapy;
- epidemiology;
- exercise physiology;
- genetic counselling;
- nuclear medicine technology;
- nutrition and dietetics;
- occupational therapy;
- optometry;
- orthoptics;
- orthotics and prosthetics;
- perfusion;
- physiotherapy;
- podiatry;
- psychology;
- radiation therapy;
- radiography;
- social work provided at a public or private hospital or community healthcare facility;
- sonography;
- speech pathology.

Medical concerns

What do I do if I have medical concerns about getting vaccinated?

If you have medical concerns about being vaccinated, you need to speak to your doctor.

You need to advise Employee Assistance Section as soon as possible if you will not receive your COVID-19 vaccination by the required dates.

I am pregnant or planning pregnancy. What should I do?

You can get vaccinated if you're pregnant, breastfeeding or trying to become pregnant. Vaccination reduces the risk of severe disease during pregnancy and helps to keep you and your unborn baby protected from the virus.

If you have medical concerns about being vaccinated, you need to speak to your doctor.



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Exemptions

What happens if I cannot be vaccinated because of a medical reason? How can I get an exemption?

1. You will need to seek a medical certificate from a legally qualified medical practitioner which states that you have a temporary or permanent medical reason for vaccination exemption in accordance with the guideline published by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI):
www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-expanded-guidance-on-temporary-medical-exemptions-for-covid-19-vaccines
Any such medical certificate will need to specify the nature of the exemption and the basis on which it applies.
2. You will need to complete an [SA Health Chief Public Health Officer Immunisation Exemption Application Form](#) and submit this, along with your medical certificate signed by a legally qualified medical practitioner, to Health.NJNPExemptions@sa.gov.au.
3. Your application for an exemption must be endorsed by the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO). If approved, the CPHO will provide a signed exemption letter that can be provided to your employer.

Form is also available at this link: www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/emergency-declarations/healthcare-setting-workers-vaccination

Note: The ATAGI expanded guidance on acute major medical conditions that warrant a temporary medical exemption relevant for COVID-19 vaccines is available at: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-expanded-guidance-on-temporary-medical-exemptions-for-covid-19-vaccines>

What happens if my application for a medical exemption is not approved?

Medical exemptions will only be accepted and endorsed by the CPHO if they are in accordance with the ATAGI published guidelines.

If your medical certificate is not in accordance with the ATAGI guidelines and is not endorsed by the CPHO, you are subject to the Direction and must meet the vaccination requirements.

Booking your vaccination

How can I book in a vaccination appointment?

To find a COVID-19 vaccination appointment, visit the Vaccine Clinic Finder at <https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au>

What happens if I can't get a vaccination appointment time before the required date?

You are encouraged to book a vaccination time as soon as possible or attend one of the walk-in clinics.



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How can I prove I have been vaccinated?

There are several options to receive your 'proof of COVID-19 vaccination':

- Download your COVID-19 digital certificate via the Express Plus Medicare mobile app or your Medicare online account through myGov.
 - You can add your COVID-19 digital certificate to your Apple Wallet or Google Pay.
 - Instructions are available on the Services Australia website.
- If you can't get proof online, your vaccination provider may be able to print your immunisation history statement for you.
- Call the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809 (Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm) and ask for your statement to be sent to you. It can take up to 14 days to arrive in the post.
- If you're not eligible for Medicare, call the Australian Immunisation Register and request your certificate be mailed to you or add your COVID-19 certificate to your digital wallet using the Individual Healthcare Identifiers service (IHI service) through myGov.

Taking leave or on leave

What leave is available if I have an adverse reaction to the vaccination?

SAPOL employees can access available sick leave if they experience any side effects to the vaccination.

What if I'm already on short-term leave when vaccinations are due?

If you are already on leave at the time vaccinations are due, you are still encouraged to get vaccinated as this is in your best interest to protect yourself and your family. However, you are required to have had your vaccination(s) before you return to duty and will be required to provide evidence of your vaccination status prior to resuming duty.

I am currently on long term leave (eg. maternity or long service leave). When am I required to have the vaccine? Can this be done prior to my return to work?

If you are already on leave at the time vaccinations are due, you are still encouraged to get vaccinated as this is in your best interest to protect yourself and your family. However, you are required to have had your vaccination(s) before you return to duty and will be required to provide evidence of your vaccination status prior to resuming duty.

What happens if I am not vaccinated by the required date?

If you do not provide evidence of having had one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 1 November 2021 and do not have a medical exemption certificate, you cannot enter a healthcare setting to perform your duties or undertake work, unless it is a non-medical emergency situation.



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Dismissal

Can employers dismiss non-complying employees without Fair Work ramifications?

Employees will need to seek independent legal advice.



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