



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

People in our Parishes

Authorised Worker Vaccinations

Guidelines for Metropolitan Melbourne

*Please note that the information in this document is current as at **19 October 2021***

The situation can change rapidly and, at all times, we recommend you refer to the Coronavirus website for the latest Government information

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covidsafe-settings>

AUTHORISED WORKERS

When do mandatory vaccinations come into effect for authorised workers?

By **15 October** all authorised workers need to be vaccinated, have a medical exemption evidenced by an authorised medical practitioner, or show that they have a booking for vaccination by:

- **22 October 2021** – latest booking for first dose
- **26 November 2021** – latest booking for second dose

All religious workers, that is, people (paid and volunteers) who work at or in connection with a place of worship will be subject to the Government's Mandatory Vaccination (Workers) Directions.

In order to continue working, authorised workers must provide information pertaining to their COVID-19 Vaccination status to the Parish in which they work. The Parish must hold this information in confidence and not disclose it to any person except as required by law.

What is authorised work in a parish?

Parish employees and volunteers undertaking authorised work such as livestreaming technicians and assistants, and sacristans are authorised workers and required to have a valid worker permit and be vaccinated.

What is not authorised work in a parish?

Most parish employees and volunteers are not listed as authorised workers by the Government. Employees performing roles such as Parish Secretary, Bookkeeper (administration type work) are not authorised workers.

Are worker permits still required?

Yes. To hold a valid worker permit, employees and volunteers must be an authorised worker and by 15 October have at least a booking for their first vaccination by 22 October 2021 and second vaccination by 26 November, provide proof that they are already vaccinated, or have a medical exemption evidenced by an authorised medical practitioner.

What is the difference between an authorised volunteer and someone helping in a parish?

An authorised volunteer is a person undertaking specific activities or work in a parish that provides support, maintenance and administration services outside worship or liturgies. These people need a valid authorised worker permit which requires proof of vaccination.

Volunteers and parishioners who undertake service within liturgical settings and worship (Mass, Funerals, Weddings and Prayer services for example) are able to attend the particular 'service' depending on their vaccination status. They may attend services for fully vaccinated if holding proof of vaccination or a medical exemption; or attend a service for 'unknown vaccination status' if they are not vaccinated or do not wish to disclose their status. Attendance is included and dependant on prescribed density limits and number caps.

Can a priest revoke the worker permit of an unvaccinated employee or volunteer?

Yes. If by 15 October the employee or volunteer is not vaccinated, does not have a medical exemption evidenced by an authorised medical practitioner, or does not have a booking for a first vaccination by 22 October and second vaccination by 26 November, by law the priest is required to revoke the worker permit. Worker permits that have been issued for an employee who does not provide vaccination information will be revoked.

Can an employee who is not vaccinated be dismissed?

An unvaccinated person cannot work anywhere other than their main residence. If a person cannot perform their job at home, then there are a number of options to be considered. Your Parish Priest will discuss these with you.

Can I provide a medical exemption to my employer?

Yes. An authorised worker can be given a permit to work outside their residence after 15 October if they have a certificate from an authorised medical practitioner that states that the person is unable to receive a dose or further dose of a COVID vaccine due to a medical condition or an acute medical illness. A medical certificate which does not state those reasons or gives some other reason will not be sufficient to enable the permit to be issued.

Am I exempt from being vaccinated if I've had coronavirus?

People who have had coronavirus are still required to have the vaccine once they have fully recovered. Some people may be eligible to receive a temporary exemption for up to 6 months, however, are required to provide a medical exemption from a medical provider.

Following the period of exemption, there will be a requirement to provide confirmation of having had the vaccine for staff attending the workplace.

We have been using volunteers to check parishioners into the Church for Mass and other services before the current lockdowns. Are they now called COVID Check-in Marshals?

Yes. The term 'Marshal' has been used by the Victorian Government for some time and it can mean different things in different industries. When our churches open again, Marshals will be required to play a role in the check-in process.

For people assisting with check-in under the current lockdown conditions (such as people attending funerals), and from 11.59pm Thursday 21 October when we welcome further opening, there is a requirement to follow the same rules that have been in place since the beginning of the current lockdown. This means a check-in Marshal is required for ensuring each person who enters a venue uses the Services Victoria QR code to check in on arrival (or an alternative record keeping method, where relevant). To find out more about the role of the Marshal visit:

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covid-check-in-marshals>

While I must be vaccinated as an authorised worker, I may still catch coronavirus and I am concerned about that.

If you are concerned you should discuss with your Parish Priest and continue to work from home rather than apply for a permit to work outside of your main residence.

What vaccination records do we expect our parishes to keep?

Parishes are required to keep the same vaccination records as any other business with authorised workers. As at 15 October, as part of providing or holding a valid worker permit, the employer must keep a record of a vaccination certificate of the authorised worker. These records will be kept confidential.

CLERGY

If a member of the Clergy is working and is not vaccinated, is he required to disclose this to CAM, parish staff, volunteers, or other parishioners?

No. Clergy members cannot be compelled to disclose their vaccination status by virtue of the Privacy Act.

However, as a matter of moral responsibility, we encourage those Clergy who are unable to be vaccinated, or who have not been vaccinated, to inform the parish community so that the faithful are in a position to make their own informed decisions for the sake of their health and wellbeing.

Currently more than 90 percent of our active Clergy are fully vaccinated, and all Clergy continue to be strongly encouraged to be vaccinated for the good of the communities in which they minister.

If I am working with a member of the Clergy who is not vaccinated and they infect me with coronavirus, what is the responsibility of the Archdiocese?

In this situation, the Archdiocese is not responsible. By law, the Archdiocese and Parishes are required to follow the Chief Health Officer's Direction.

Are retired priests part of the Clergy exemption?

Yes. All Clergy are exempt from vaccinations in terms of their ministry. As mentioned above, over 90 percent of active priests and deacons had confirmed that they have been vaccinated.

Will the Clergy exemption stay in place?

Our understanding is that under a legal requirement, the government will continue to exempt Clergy from mandatory vaccination requirements to allow them to have permits to conduct religious services and provide pastoral care and comfort for the purpose of end-of-life faith reasons. Hospital and Care facilities will have independent requirements that may take precedence over the exemption. Clergy of the Archdiocese are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated where medically possible for the common good of the community and the people they serve.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Chief Health Officer's Direction:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/202110/covid-19-mandatory-vaccination-%28workers%29-directions.pdf>

Authorised Provider and Worker List: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/authorised-provider-and-authorised-worker-list>

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please refer to the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne website for the latest detailed Guidance to Parishes during COVID19: <https://cam.org.au/Guidance-for-Parishes-COVID-19/>

COVID Support is available at: covidsupport@cam.org.au

If you need to make contact with the CAM HR Team, please email: hadmin@cam.org.au or phone [03 9926 2424](tel:0399262424)

If you need assistance from the CAM IT Help Desk, please email: new.work@cam.org.au