



COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS PLAN HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) takes pride in providing an environment free of known hazards for our staff, members, project hosts, and partners. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid spread of the virus and variants, as well as the potential risks to those exposed to the virus, CCMI has implemented a vaccination policy for all staff/members.

All staff/members of CCMI are covered by this policy and are required to be fully vaccinated. A person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after the single-dose J&J/Janssen vaccine.

All staff/members are required to also comply with the organization's associated safety policies, including those recommended by the CDC to minimize the risks of exposure and/or spread of COVID-19. Staff/Members who travel as part of their job responsibilities may be required to abide by policies at other worksites.

New CCMI staff/members are expected to acknowledge that they have received and reviewed this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Handbook by signing and returning to their supervisor the form found in Addendum D at the bottom of this document.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Human Resources
Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa
hr@conservationcorps.org
(651) 209-9900

These protocols were developed by CCMI staff while following guidance from the CDC, state health departments, and federal regulations. Some language and field BMPs were inspired from partner organizations.

CCMI COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

CCMI is committed to providing a safe workplace for all staff/members. This includes taking protective measures to protect against physical, mental, and environmental hazards. The COVID-19 pandemic is determined to be a workplace hazard, and in accordance with CCMI's vaccination policy, all staff/members must be fully vaccinated.

CCMI recognizes that there may be religious or medical reasons staff are not able to be vaccinated. Any staff/member unable to be vaccinated may request an exemption from the organization's vaccination policy. All requests will be considered, consistent with the program needs of CCMI in accordance with state and federal law. Where there is an objective basis to do so, CCMI may ask you for additional information to determine if you are legally entitled to an exemption. Objections to COVID-19 vaccinations that are based on nonreligious reasons, including personal preferences or nonreligious concerns about the vaccine, do not qualify for an exemption.

Religious Exemption Requests

CCMI may consider several factors in assessing whether a request for an exemption is based on a sincerely held religious belief, including whether the staff or member has acted in a manner inconsistent with their professed belief. But no one factor is determinative. An individual's beliefs—or degree of adherence—may change over time and, therefore, a staff/member's newly adopted or inconsistently observed practices may be based on a sincerely held religious belief. All requests for a religious exemption must be signed by a member of the clergy/spiritual leader and will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Medical Exemption Requests

CCMI may require that staff/members applying for a medical exemption also submit documentation from a medical practitioner qualified to make such a determination. This means the medical provider must be treating the staff for the diagnosed medical condition that interferes with the staff or member's ability to receive the vaccination or be involved in care related to the health condition.

In general, it is the staff/member's responsibility to notify Human Resources of the need for an exemption. When appropriate, CCMI may need written permission to obtain additional information from the staff or member's physician or other medical or rehabilitation professional. CCMI may also require that staff/members affidavit with the exemption request. Any information obtained will be maintained confidentially.

COVID-19 Procedures - Overview and General Information

Reporting Vaccination Status

All Staff/Members are required to report their vaccination status and provide proof of vaccination directly to Human Resources. Staff/members are expected to report truthful and accurate information about their COVID-19 vaccination status, and, if applicable, their testing results. Acceptable proof of vaccination status should include the staff or member's name, type of vaccination administered, the date(s) of vaccination, and the name of the health care professional or clinic that administered the vaccine, and can be any of the following:

- The record of immunization from a health care provider or pharmacy
- A copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card
- A copy of medical records documenting the vaccination
- A copy of immunization records from a public health, state, or tribal immunization information system
- A copy of any other official documentation that contains the type of vaccine administered, date(s) of administration, and the name of the health care professional(s) or clinic site(s) administering the vaccine(s).

If a staff/member is unable to provide any of the indicated forms of vaccination verification, the staff or member can provide a signed and dated statement attesting to their vaccination status (fully or partially vaccinated) and that they have lost or are unable to produce one of the other forms of acceptable proof, and include the following language:

"I declare that this statement about my vaccination status is true and accurate. I understand that knowingly providing false information regarding my vaccination status on this form may subject me to disciplinary action, up to and including termination."

Vaccination Support

To help staff/members receive the required vaccination, CCMI will consider advance requests for schedule changes or time off to obtain the vaccination. Staff/members should consult their medical insurance plan to verify coverage for vaccinations.

Paid Time for Vaccination and Recovery and Positive COVID Test

Members may be entitled to up to 4 hours of paid time, per dose, to travel to the vaccination site, receive a vaccination, and return to work. These hours are not counted toward service hours. Up to 2 days may be taken by a member experiencing side effects related to the COVID- 19 vaccination that prevent them from working. Staff may utilize accrued sick leave to cover time needed to travel to the vaccinations site, receive a vaccination, return to work, and to recover from side effects associated with the vaccine.

Additional time may be granted, if necessary, but will be unpaid or require the use of available PTO or sick pay.

If a member tests positive for COVID-19, they are entitled to five (5) days of paid leave to accommodate isolation period. This time is paid by CCMI once per fiscal year and will not be counted against the member's PTO balance. Members will need to provide proof of a positive test by sending documentation to HR@conservationcorps.org.

Staff are able utilize their accrued sick time balances to cover any isolation period required and recovery time as a result of a positive COVID-19 test.

Testing and Masks

COVID-19 Weekly Testing

If a Staff/Member receives a positive test result, they will be required to follow CDC's quarantine and isolation guidelines.

Failure to comply with this portion of the policy may result in disciplinary action and absences may be subject to discipline in accordance with CCMI's attendance policy.

Scheduling for COVID-19 testing will be the responsibility of the individual staff/member. Costs associated with testing may be covered by health insurance, please consult health insurance plan documents. Contact Human Resources for more information.

Please See Addendum A for a summary of CDC guidelines for actions to take when a staff/member has tested positive for COVID-19 or exposed to someone who is COVID-19 positive.

Masks

Conservation Corps policy for masks will follow CDC recommendations. This means CCMI will recommend all members/staff to wear a well-fitting mask indoors in public, regardless of vaccination status when the Covid-19 Community Level is High. Current covid-19 community level data by county is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>.

CCMI members and staff are able to wear a mask whenever they feel one is needed.

CCMI Fleet / Vehicle Travel

- Vehicles should be equipped to always carry at least a few new disposable face masks in each vehicle for use when cloth masks are damaged, or a new mask is needed.
- It is recommended to use fresh air settings for climate controls and avoid recirculated air, and/or travel with windows adjusted to ensure adequate air flow.

New Hires

This policy is shared with prospective staff/members upon an offer of employment or AmeriCorps service. All new staff/members are required to comply with the vaccination requirements outlined in this policy upon hire. Any new hire that is not fully vaccinated may have the start date delayed until such a date that they are considered fully vaccinated, or the offer may be rescinded. Accommodation requests may be submitted to Human Resources prior to the first day of employment and will be considered in accordance with CCMI policies.

Contract or Subcontract Staff/Member

CCMI may place staff/members at locations that are considered government contractors or subcontractors. Any staff working at such a location will be expected to comply with the requirements of that work site. CCMI will make every effort to provide continuous employment for any staff/member requesting an exemption to this policy; however, we cannot guarantee that each request can be accommodated, based on work requirements and business needs.

Failure to comply with this policy is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Definitions and Key Terms

Terms	Definitions
Fully Vaccinated	A person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after the single-dose J&J/Janssen vaccine. Fully vaccinated, however, is not the same as having the best protection. People are best protected when they stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations, which includes getting boosters when eligible.
Up to date	You are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines when you have received all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you, when eligible.
COVID-19 Test	A viral test to look for a current infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, by testing specimens from your nose or mouth. There are two main types of viral tests: nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) and antigen tests. These tests can be performed by a medical provider or at home. Visit FDA's website to see a list of authorized tests.

COVID-19 “DETECTED POSITIVE” Notification and Excusal from the Workplace

Staff/members are required to notify their immediate supervisor and Human Resources at CCMI immediately following receipt of a positive COVID-19 test or following a diagnosis by a licensed health care provider. Staff/members diagnosed with COVID-19 will be immediately excused from the workplace and required to quarantine according to current CDC and/or local public health agency guidelines.

Failure to comply with this policy is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

If a member tests positive for COVID-19, they are entitled to five (5) days of paid leave to accommodate isolation period. This time is paid by CCMI once per fiscal year and will not be counted against the member's PTO balance. Members will need to provide proof of a positive test by sending documentation to HR@conservationcorps.org.

Staff are able utilize their accrued sick time balances to cover any isolation period required and recovery time as a result of a positive COVID-19 test.

Return to Work Following a Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Test

You may return to work after 5 days if you have a negative test and you are symptom free. If your symptoms are not improving, remain away from work until you are fever-free for 24 hours and your symptoms are improving.

Please See Addendum A for a summary of CDC guidelines for actions to take when a staff or member is tested at COVID-19 positive or exposed to someone who is COVID-19 positive.

Exposure Communications

Management Communications When a Staff/Member Has Contracted COVID-19

If a staff/member states that they have COVID-19 the supervisor should send the person home and inform their manager and Human Resources immediately. Their respective manager is advised to inform any other staff/members in the same team of their possible exposure to COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality of the individual allegedly infected, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The manager or Human Resources should instruct staff/members about how to proceed based on the CDC guidelines.

When a manager learns that a staff/member has been diagnosed positive for COVID-19, the manager will also notify any immediate and/or recent project host(s) site(s) where the staff/member may have had contact with anyone else in the workplace. CCMI expects the same courtesy from our partners if indeed the partner identifies a COVID-19 staff at a CCMI project host site.

Template for Manager Communications to the Team:

We have been notified that one of our staff/members has been diagnosed with COVID-19. As such, anyone working at [site/team name] may have been exposed to this virus. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) If you experience symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, coughing, or shortness of breath), please inform your crew leader/manager at [contact information] and contact your health care provider. CCMI will keep all medical information confidential and will only disclose it on a need-to-know business basis.

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa is always taking measures to ensure the safety of our staff/members during this coronavirus outbreak.

For more information on COVID-19, including symptoms and treatment, visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov.

Please See Addendum A for a summary of CDC guidelines for actions to take when a staff/member tests positive for COVID-19 or is exposed to someone who is COVID-19 positive.

Accommodations to CCMI COVID-19 Policies

Reasonable Accommodations to Workspace or Service

CCMI will make reasonable accommodations for staff/members who request altered worksite arrangements or time off from work or service due to underlying medical conditions that may put them at greater risk from COVID-19.

Please refer to Addendum B for information regarding vaccine exemptions for religious or medical reasons.

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) – Adherence to Guidelines

A staff/member can refuse to work if they reasonably believe they are in imminent danger, according to the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act. They must have a reasonable belief that there is a threat of death or serious physical harm likely to occur immediately or within a short period for this protection to apply.

CCMI COVID-19 Policy for Staff/Members Serving at Partner Facilities or Job Sites

When there is a difference between CCMI protocols and the partner's agency, the highest caution standards practices should be followed.

Confidentiality of Medical Information

CCMI must maintain the confidentiality of staff COVID-19 test results and vaccination status as provided by law. All information gathered under this Policy, including test results, vaccination status, attestation forms and signed COVID-19 Testing Consent forms, must be retained by HR according to the applicable retention schedule and in a secure medical file separate from the staff member's personnel file.

Testing information may be shared with the designated testing laboratory, the designated vendor, the Minnesota Department of Health, Iowa Department of Health, local public health, HR staff, members of the CCMI's staff with a business need to know, and others authorized by law.

COVID-19 vaccination status may be shared with HR staff, members of the CCMI's staff with a business need to know, and others authorized by law.

Addendum A

CDC Guidelines for Recommended Actions to Take Based on COVID- 19 Positive Diagnosis or Exposure

The chart below summarizes general CDC Guidance in various scenarios of a staff becoming infected with COVID-19 or being exposed to an individual with COVID-19. As symptoms and severity of illness can vary greatly from staff to staff, employers should default to recommendations made by a staff/member' health care provider or local health officials as it relates to dates of isolation/quarantine and return to work status.



COVID-19

Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19

Updated Aug. 11, 2022

If you were exposed to COVID-19, you should start taking precautions.



Isolation and Exposure Calculator

A tool to help you determine if you need to isolate or take other steps to prevent spreading COVID-19.

Isolation & Exposure

If you have COVID-19, you can spread the virus to others. There are precautions you can take to prevent spreading it to others: isolation, masking, and avoiding contact with [people who are at high risk of getting very sick](#). Isolation is used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19.

These recommendations do not change based on [COVID-19 Community Levels](#). If you have COVID-19, also see additional information on [treatments](#) that may be available to you.

This information is intended for a general audience. Healthcare professionals should see [Ending Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19](#). This CDC guidance is meant to supplement—not replace—any federal, state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations.



For Healthcare Professionals: [Ending Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19](#)



When to Isolate

Regardless of vaccination status, **you should isolate from others when you have COVID-19.**

You should also isolate **if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have [test](#) results**. If your results are positive, follow the full isolation recommendations below. If your results are negative, you can end your isolation.



IF YOU TEST

Negative

You can end your isolation



IF YOU TEST

Positive

Follow the full isolation recommendations below

When you have COVID-19, isolation is counted in days, as follows:

If you had no symptoms

- **Day 0 is the day you were tested** (not the day you received your positive test result)
- **Day 1 is the first full day** following the day you were tested
- If you develop [symptoms](#) within 10 days of when you were tested, the **clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset**

If you had symptoms

- **Day 0 of isolation is the day of symptom onset**, regardless of when you tested positive
- **Day 1 is the first full day** after the day your [symptoms](#) started



Isolation

If you test positive for COVID-19, **stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home.**

You are **likely most infectious during these first 5 days.**

- **Wear a high-quality mask** if you must be around others at home and in public.
- Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask. For travel guidance, see CDC’s [Travel webpage](#).
- **Do not travel.**
- Stay home and separate from others as much as possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Take steps to [improve ventilation](#) at home, if possible.
- Don’t share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Monitor your [symptoms](#). If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (like trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.
- Learn more about [what to do if you have COVID-19](#).



Ending Isolation

End isolation based on how serious your COVID-19 symptoms were. Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

If you had no symptoms

You may end isolation after day 5.

If you had symptoms and:

Your symptoms are improving

You **may end isolation after day 5** if:

- You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).

Your symptoms are not improving

Continue to isolate until:

- You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).
- Your symptoms are improving. ¹

If you had symptoms and had:

Moderate illness (you experienced shortness of **Severe illness (you were hospitalized) or have a**

breath or had difficulty breathing)

You need to **isolate through day 10**.

weakened immune system

- You need to **isolate through day 10**.
- **Consult your doctor** before ending isolation.
- Ending isolation without a viral test may not be an option for you.

If you are unsure if your symptoms are moderate or severe or if you have a weakened immune system, talk to a healthcare provider for further guidance.

Regardless of when you end isolation

Until at least day 11:

- Avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.
- Remember to wear a high-quality mask when indoors around others at home and in public.
- Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask until you are able to discontinue masking (see below).
- For travel guidance, see CDC's [Travel webpage](#).



Removing Your Mask

After you have ended isolation, when you are feeling better (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms improving),

- Wear your mask through day 10.

OR

- If you have access to antigen tests, you should consider using them. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, you may remove your mask sooner than day 10.

Note: If your antigen test results¹ are positive, you may still be infectious. You should continue wearing a mask and wait at least 48 hours before taking another test. Continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until you have two sequential negative results. This may mean you need to continue wearing a mask and testing beyond day 10.

After you have ended isolation, if your COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, restart your isolation at day 0. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions about your symptoms or when to end isolation.

^[1] As noted in the Food and Drug Administration labeling for authorized over-the-counter antigen tests, negative test results do not rule out SARS-CoV-2 infection and should not be used as the sole basis for treatment or patient management decisions, including infection control decisions.

Last Updated Aug. 11, 2022

Addendum B

COVID-19 Vaccine Religious Exemption Form

CCMI respects the religious beliefs and practices of our Staff/Members. We are also subject to federal mandates that require employers to implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination and/or testing program. Staff/member who have a sincerely held religious belief that precludes them from obtaining a vaccination may request an exemption by requesting an accommodation. CCMI will review the request and consider reasonable accommodations, unless doing so poses an undue hardship.

Staff/Members requesting an exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine due to a religious exemption should complete this form, seek approval from their clergy/spiritual leader and submit it to Human Resources for approval.

Section 1: To be completed by the staff/member

Staff/Member Name	Date

Email address: _____ Phone number: _____

1. Please describe the nature of your sincerely held religious beliefs or religious practice or observance that conflicts with the company's requirement to comply with the federal mandate requiring COVID vaccination.

2. What do you propose as the accommodation or modification that will allow you to continue perform your job?

3. List any alternative accommodations that also would eliminate the conflict between the requirement, policy, or practice and your sincerely held religious beliefs.

I, _____, attest that the information provided in this document is truthful and accurately reflects my religious practices or tenets.

Staff/Member Signature

Date

Section 2: To be completed by the Clergy/Spiritual Leader

Clergy/Spiritual Leader Printed Name _____

Date _____

Clergy/Spiritual Leader Signature _____

Phone Number _____

Section 3: To be completed by the employer

Accommodation Decision:

_____ Approved as requested
_____ Approved, but different from original request
_____ Denied

Identify the accommodation provided:

If the approved accommodation is different from the one originally requested, explain the basis for denying the original request.

If an alternative accommodation was offered, indicate whether it was:

_____ Accepted
_____ Rejected

If it was rejected, explain the basis for the rejection.

If the accommodation is denied and no alternative accommodation was proposed, explain the basis for denying the request without an alternative accommodation.

Human Resources Representative's Name: _____

Human Resources Representative's Signature: _____

Date: _____

COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Form

To Whom It May Concern:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI) has implemented a requirement for staff/members to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The staff/member mentioned below has requested an exemption from receiving the COVID-19 vaccination. We will consider requests when provided with documentation from a healthcare provider stating a health condition exists that would require accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Staff/Member Name

Date

Questions To Help Determine Whether a Staff Has a Disability

For reasonable accommodation under the ADA, a Staff/Member has a disability if he or she has an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities or a record of such an impairment. The following questions may help determine whether a staff has a disability that would be negatively impacted by receiving a COVID-19 vaccine:

Does the Staff/Member have a physical or mental impairment that would be negatively impacted if the COVID-19 vaccination is administered?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Answer the following question based on any limitations the staff/member has related to receiving the COVID-19 vaccination.		
<p>Would receiving the COVID-19 vaccination <i>significantly or severely restrict</i> the staff/members ability to perform the required job duties?</p> <p><i>Note: Does not need to significantly or severely restrict to meet this standard. It may be useful in appropriate cases to consider the condition under which the individual performs the major life activity; the way the individual performs the major life activity; and/or the duration of time it takes the individual to perform the major life activity, or for which the individual can perform the major life activity.</i></p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Describe the staff's limitations when the impairment is active at the bottom of this form.</p>		
<p>Possible risks, or contraindications, could include:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Severe allergic reaction after a previous dose or to a vaccine component</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain) _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Exemption Length:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Temporary through:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Permanent</p>	

Note: The request for vaccination accommodation does not alter any policy that may be in place for the health and safety of company staff/member. This request will be used to determine the need for and ability of the company to accommodate such a request.

_____(Staff/Member name) _____(does) __ (does not) require an accommodation from the company COVID-19 vaccination requirement, due to a disability that would jeopardize health or safety for this individual.

Physician/Provider Signature

Date

Physician/Provider Printed Name

Name, Address, Phone Number of Practice

Questions

Please direct any questions regarding this policy to HR at hr@conservationcorps.org.

Addendum C

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Handbook Acknowledgment

I have received a copy of the Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Handbook. I understand it is my responsibility to read, understand, and follow the information in this handbook.

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa retains the right to interpret, deviate, change, revise, or eliminate any of the policies described in this handbook as the pandemic and our response evolves and will communicate any revisions with all members.

Name (print)

Signature

Date

Please sign and date this page and return via email to HR at hr@conservationcorps.org.