



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer

VA Central Office
Washington, DC

DATE June 24, 2021

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER (OCHCO) BULLETIN

SUBJECT: Paid Time Off for VA Employees Fully Vaccinated Against COVID-19

This OCHCO Bulletin provides guidance and information on the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) authorization of four hours of administrative leave for VA employees who voluntarily receive the COVID-19 vaccine from the VA or an outside health care provider. Employees who receive the COVID-19 vaccine reduce the risk of acquiring COVID-19 and transmitting the virus to Veterans, customers, and co-workers.

Eligibility: VA employees who accrue leave will be eligible to receive four hours of administrative leave for receiving the COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., after the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or after a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen)) on or before December 31, 2021.

Employees who are unable to be vaccinated for disability or religious reasons are also eligible for four hours of administrative leave.

Former employees are not eligible to receive administrative leave under this policy.

Employees who do not accrue leave are encouraged to receive the vaccine but are not eligible for four hours of administrative leave.

Administrative Leave Request: Employees who meet the eligibility requirements above may request to use four hours of administrative leave beginning the pay period after the date of this Bulletin by requesting the four hours of administrative leave in the Veterans Affairs Time and Attendance System (VATAS). By submitting the leave request in VATAS, an employee is self-certifying that they meet the above eligibility requirements. Employees are not required to provide documentation to their supervisor.

The leave request must be made at least one pay period in advance. The four hours may be used in one 4-hour increment or in two 2-hour increments. The leave must be used no later than a calendar year from issuance of this bulletin and may not be taken retroactively.

Supervisors will approve the leave in accordance with local leave granting procedures, where work schedules allow the approval of the leave and the leave will not affect the agency's ability to continue meeting its mission.

Employees will enter their request as administrative leave in VATAS as follows:

- Leave Type: LN – Administrative
- Special Note: Parades, Ceremonies and Civic Activities
- Submitter Remarks: OCHCO 06242021

Employee Vaccination Reporting: As part of this effort, the Department is also encouraging VA employees that were vaccinated by non-VA providers or their personal VHA providers outside of Employee Occupational Health to voluntarily share the information to the local Employee Occupational Health or facility health unit so the information can be recorded in the employee medical folder or electronic health records system.

Disclosure of vaccination status to Employee Occupational Health may be used by VA to track the aggregate number of employees vaccinated against COVID-19 for safety and health purposes. The vaccination information voluntarily provided to Employee Occupational Health Services is protected health information (PHI) and is covered under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act regulations. PHI may only be used or shared as legally permitted, such as pursuant to a signed, written authorization from the employee.

Other flexibilities: Employees who are vaccinated after December 31, 2021, or do not otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for administrative leave may qualify for other leave flexibilities available for COVID-19 vaccinations.

- Administrative Leave to Receive the COVID-19 Vaccine: Employees are eligible for administrative leave for the time necessary to be vaccinated by VA or through a non-VA provider. See: <https://vaww.va.gov/OHRM/HRLibrary/Bulletins/2021/ochco-bulletin-20210205-01.pdf>
- Administrative Leave for Adverse Reactions to the COVID-19 Vaccine: Employees are eligible to receive up to two days of additional administrative leave per dose when experiencing an adverse reaction and unable to work due to the vaccine side effects. See OCHCO Bulletin: <https://vaww.va.gov/OHRM/HRLibrary/Bulletins/2021/ochco-bulletin-20210205-01.pdf>
- Emergency Paid Leave: VA also provides up to 600 hours of emergency paid leave for employees to obtain a vaccination related to COVID-19, or to recover from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization. See OCHCO Bulletin: <https://vaww.va.gov/OHRM/HRLibrary/Bulletins/2021/ochco-bulletin-20210527-01.pdf>

Employees should contact their HR office with questions. HR offices with questions regarding this bulletin may be referred to Worklife and Benefits Service at vaco058worklife@va.gov.