



Statement on Mandatory Vaccination Policies

The IBB recognizes that COVID-19 is an unprecedented global pandemic which has had a tremendous impact on our health, our work, and our families. As Canada navigates a fourth wave of the pandemic, it is more important than ever that we protect each other and slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

The IBB supports public health measures to increase vaccination rates as an essential means of protecting Canadians' health and defeating the COVID-19 pandemic. However, all measures to promote vaccination rates must be accomplished in a fair, reasonable, and transparent fashion, with full consultation and negotiation with unions where applicable.

The IBB's position on vaccination policies is therefore guided by the following principles:

1. Vaccination policies must be based on current scientific data

The IBB urges employers and contractors to avoid adopting policies that are needlessly invasive, onerous, or made without the backing of science and public health expertise. Science has demonstrated that masking and physical distancing, alongside frequent COVID-19 testing, are effective ways of fighting COVID-19. The IBB will support more stringent vaccination policies in higher risk settings only where they are necessary to ensure members' health and safety, as determined by public health experts.

2. Vaccination policies must provide human rights exemptions

Employers have a legal duty to accommodate for disabilities, religion/creed, or other protected human rights grounds. Employers should ensure that members who are unable to be vaccinated due to protected human rights grounds are not refused work, but rather, can continue working with an accommodation that keeps them and their coworkers as safe as possible.

3. Vaccination policies must include measures to protect member privacy

Employers must have measures in place to protect the confidentiality of workers' vaccination information and restrict the employer's ability to access and share

such information. Any request for such information should include the reason(s) for the request and a description of how the information will be used along the with measures taken to maintain confidentiality.

4. Employers still have an obligation to protect members

Finally, if workplace COVID-19 vaccination policies are put in place, employers still have a duty to provide proper PPE to workers and to ensure workplace communicable disease prevention measures are adhered to in accordance with the applicable public health authority. A mandatory vaccination policy does not repeal an employer's obligation to protect workers' health with respect to COVID-19. Employers should not opt for a mandatory vaccination policy as a means of avoiding the expense associated with less invasive prevention protocols. All employers have an obligation to manage the safety of their employees along with the subsequent costs. Vaccines are one component of a larger communicable disease prevention plan to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19.

In brief, while the IBB strongly advocates for necessary measures to ensure workplace health and safety, we oppose measures that needlessly infringe on members' privacy, autonomy, and human rights. As noted above, there are feasible and practical ways to respond to those who are opposed to vaccination that do not come at the expense of workplace health and safety. These measures, including employer conducted onsite COVID-19 testing and the provision of suitable PPE if vaccination is refused, must be present in all vaccination policies by default. The IBB will support more stringent vaccination policies in higher-risk worksites only where they are necessary according to current scientific data and public health experts.

In Solidarity,



Arnie Stadnick
International Vice President for Canada