

## **Department of the Air Force Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **GENERAL**

The FDA formally licensed the Pfizer-BioNTech COMIRNATY® COVID-19 vaccine on 23 August 2021. Secretary Of Defense HON Lloyd Austin issued a memorandum on 24 August 2021, which directed Secretaries of the Military Departments to immediately begin full vaccination of all members of the Armed Forces under DoD authority on active duty or in the Ready Reserve, including National Guard, who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The Secretary of the Air Force HON Frank Kendall directed that DAF components move out aggressively on this guidance.

The Secretary of Defense's direction establishes a requirement for Service members to be fully vaccinated. Service members can elect to receive any FDA licensed or authorized (Emergency Use Authorized (EUA)) vaccine to meet that requirement. If vaccinations are being given on a mandatory basis, only vaccines with full FDA licensure may be required. At this time, that only includes the COMIRNATY® (Pfizer) vaccine, but more may be added to that list in the future. COMIRNATY® has the same formulation and can be used interchangeably with the FDA authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Providers can use doses distributed under the EUA to administer the vaccination series as if the doses were the licensed vaccine according to FDA guidance. Other vaccines may be added to this list in the future.

Any refusal to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, absent an approved exemption, may be punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Prior to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, Department of the Air Force Active and Reserve Component personnel, as well as the Air National Guard, will have access to healthcare providers and chaplains at DAF vaccination sites to address questions or concerns with COVID-19 vaccination. Commands are advised to consult with their servicing Staff Judge Advocate office for additional guidance on vaccination non-compliance. The process for obtaining exemptions for all mandatory vaccinations is provided in AFI 48-110\_IP for medical exemptions, and DAFI 52-201 for religious accommodations. Pursuant to Air Force and DoD policy, approved exemptions may be modified or rescinded if mission needs dictate.

Unit vaccination data will be tracked and monitored in ASIMS with weekly reporting through command channels to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. It is the expectation of the SecAF that commanders execute this guidance as soon as feasible, taking into consideration the availability of vaccine and mission requirements.

#### **REFERENCES**

20210824 Secretary of Defense Memo Mandating COVID-19 Vaccination for DoD Service Members. AFI 48-110\_IP, Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis for the Prevention of Infectious Diseases.

DAFI 52-201, Religious Freedom in the Department of the Air Force.

20210825 DoD Public Affairs Guidance: COVID-19 Vaccinations for Military Personnel

20210904 Updated DAF Public Affairs Guidance: Department of the Air Force Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation

20210903 Secretary of the Air Force Memo Mandating COVID-19 Vaccination for DAF Military Members

## PERSONNEL

### 1) Will I be discharged if I refuse to take the vaccine?

Should a Department of the Air Force (DAF) service member decline to accept the vaccine, without a valid medical or administrative exemption, we will make available to him/her a full range of resources – to include individual and professional medical advice – to demonstrate the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine. We want our people to be fully informed about any medical procedure, this one included.

If counseling and informal efforts fail to convince the member to receive the vaccine, a member's chain of command could, as a last resort, take appropriate administrative or disciplinary action commensurate to the alleged offense, up to and including discharge. Commanders have a range of other tools available to them and will ultimately make judgments based on the circumstances of each case in consultation with legal, chaplain, and medical professionals.

### 2) Can I choose to separate or retire instead of taking the COVID-19 vaccine?

In order to retire or separate in lieu of taking the COVID-19 vaccine, regular [or active component] Active Duty Airmen and Guardians must have a commander-approved submission prior to 1 November 2021, and the approved retirement or separation date must be no later than 1 April 2022 (the first day of the fifth month following the COVID-19 mandatory vaccination date of 2 November 2021). If a member does not have an approved effective retirement or separation date in line with the aforementioned timelines, they are required to be vaccinated.

Air Force Reserve IMAs and TRs who opt to retire in lieu of receiving the vaccine must have a commander-approved submission prior to 1 November 2021. The approved retirement date must be no later than 2 June 2022. Upon retirement submission, these Airmen will be limited to further participation for out-processing purposes IAW AFR policy and local wing/organization policy. Members with a retirement date after 2 June 2022 must be fully vaccinated, have an exemption approved or in process, or formally decline the vaccine IAW SecAF direction.

Air Force Reserve AGRs will be able to retire without taking the vaccine if their retirement date is prior to 2 December 2021 or can be placed in terminal leave on or before 2 December 2021. If AGRs cannot retire before 2 December 2021 or be in terminal leave status on or prior to 2 December 2021, if at the point the AGR refuses to take the vaccine, their AGR tour will be curtailed and they will be reassigned to the IRR or discharged.

### 3) If I have an Active Duty Service Commitment, will it be waived if I choose to separate or retire instead of taking the COVID-19 vaccine?


No. Active Duty Service Commitment waivers will not be automatically granted; however, Airmen and Guardians may, in accordance with AFI 36-3203, Service Retirements, paragraph 3.8., "Waiver of Restrictions," request an Active Duty Service Commitment waiver in conjunction with their retirement or separation application.



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NEW


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- 4) I have an approved retirement or separation date that is beyond 1 April 2022, and I do not want to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Can I adjust my retirement or separation date instead of taking the COVID-19 vaccine?

Regular [Active component] Airmen and Guardians may request to adjust their approved retirement or separation date to be effective NLT 1 April 2022 (the first day of the fifth month following the COVID-19 mandatory vaccination date of 2 November 2021).

- 5) If my retirement or separation request is denied, will I have to get the COVID-19 vaccine?



Yes, pursuant to the 24 August 2021 Secretary of Defense memorandum, the subsequent 3 September 2021 Secretary of the Air Force memorandum, and subsequent DAF implementation guidance.

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- 6) If I have applied for retirement or separation in lieu of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, or have requested a medical or religious exemption, will I still be allowed access to my installation and workplace while my application or request is being processed?

Commanders and directors may permit service members who are not fully vaccinated access to the installation and the workplace in accordance with the screening and testing requirements of OSD Force Health Protection (FHP) Guidance 23 (and subsequent revisions), and applicable DAF policies.

- 7) I'm currently on terminal leave, will I be required to take the vaccine?

Members on terminal leave will not be required to take the vaccine; however, if recalled to active duty, the member will be required to take the vaccine.

- 8) Will I be allowed to reenlist or extend my current enlistment if I refuse to take the vaccine?

Reenlistment is a command prerogative and a commander may take into account vaccination status in making that determination.

- 9) If discharge is premised on the refusal to follow the order to take the vaccine, will the DAF owe me involuntary separation pay?

No. The Air Force or Space Force will not owe you separation pay.

- 10) Do I need to repay bonuses/education if I refuse to take vaccine?

If an Active Duty Service Commitment (ADSC) was incurred as a result of educational opportunities, and it was not completed before any potential separation or discharge, then the service may seek to recoup any associated funding or payments.

- 11) Will I be denied PCS/TDY or Formal School opportunities if I refuse to take the vaccine?

It is possible commanders may deny PCS/TDY or Formal School opportunities if a member is unvaccinated.

**12) Can I be pulled from training if I refuse the vaccine?**

It is possible commanders may pull a member from training if a member is unvaccinated.

**13) I'm requesting a Mandatory Separation Date (MSD) waiver. Will it be denied if I don't take the vaccine?**

Failing to maintain retention and/or readiness standards could result in denial of an MSD waiver request.

**OPERATIONS**

**14) Why do I have to take the vaccine? Won't those with exemptions also affect readiness?**

COVID-19 vaccines have proven to be safe and very effective in preventing hospitalizations and deaths. Vaccine requirements are tied to personal medical readiness, and are designed to afford Service members with the best protections available so they can perform missions across the globe.

Personnel with approved exemptions will be identified as required in all applicable data systems. Commanders will assess impact to individual and unit level readiness using vaccination status as a key parameter to determine availability to perform mission and ability to meet mission requirements. DAF personnel who are not vaccinated may be non-deployable based on specific mission circumstances. Pursuant to Air Force and DoD policy, approved exemptions may be modified or rescinded if mission needs dictate.

**15) If I am classified as non-deployable because I am not vaccinated, will I be subject to discharge?**



In accordance with DAFMAN 48-123, paragraph 4.2.2.1, mobility status is an ongoing requirement that a service member is reasonably free from any medical conditions or limitations that would preclude a deployment. In accordance with DoDI 1332.45, paragraph 1.2.b., service members who are considered non-deployable for more than 12 consecutive months will be evaluated for a retention determination or, as appropriate, referral into the Disability Evaluation System or initiation of processing for administrative separation.

**16) I'm a flyer. Will there be a grounding or "feet-on-the-ramp" policy if I refuse the vaccine? (Also refer to Question 17)**

All Airmen performing flight or controller duties must maintain medical readiness. Members who are non-compliant with medical standards may face administrative, disciplinary, and flying grounding status actions. These could include Duty Not Involving Flying (DNIF), Duty Not Involving Controlling (DNIC), and Duty Not Involving Alert (DNIA). A member will not automatically be placed in a DNIF/DNIC/DNIA status. Commanders should assess mission requirements before taking these administrative actions.

- 17) Will some AFSCs be allowed to refuse the vaccine if there is a shortage in their career field? Does the “pilot shortage” give me leverage?

No. All service members, regardless of pay grade and/or career field, are required to be vaccinated. Individual vaccination status in critically manned AFSCs will not be offered as solution to manage career field shortfalls. Members could face administrative or legal actions if they decline to take the vaccine.

## **MEDICAL**

- 18) What if the vaccine on my base is not licensed by the FDA? Can I be forced to be vaccinated?

Service members can elect to receive any FDA licensed or authorized (EUA) vaccine to meet the vaccination requirement. If vaccinations are being given on a mandatory basis, the only vaccine that may be used at this time is the Pfizer-BioNTech COMIRNATY® COVID-19 vaccine. (COMIRNATY® has the same formulation and can be used interchangeably with the FDA authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Providers can use doses distributed under the EUA to administer the vaccination series as if the doses were the licensed vaccine according to the FDA. Other vaccines may be added to this list in the future.)

If supplies are limited, members can choose to get vaccinated on their own or wait for adequate supply at a DoD facility. MTFs will have adequate vaccine supplies to meet the SecAF’s vaccination timeline.

- 19) Will vaccine refusal cause me to be DNIF/DNIC/DNIA?

Maybe. All members must maintain medical readiness. Members that are non-compliant with medical standards may face administrative, disciplinary, and flying grounding status actions. These could include Duty Not Involving Flying (DNIF), Duty Not Involving Controlling (DNIC), and Duty Not Involving Alert (DNIA).

A member refusing COVID-19 vaccination will not initially be placed in a grounding status. Before duty, during review of Go/No-Go Items they may be deemed not medically compliant. Also, once designated as “Red” in ASIMS the member may be considered to have failed to maintain medical qualification standards.

- 20) Are there exemptions for vaccination?



Yes. Much like the annual flu shot, there are medical and administrative exemptions (including religious accommodation exemptions). Airmen and Guardians should consult with their local MTF for information on the exemption process. Medical and administrative exemptions are addressed in AFI 48-110\_IP, *Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis for the Prevention of Infectious Diseases*. Religious accommodations are addressed in DAFI 52- 201, *Religious Freedom in the Department of the Air Force*. FHP 23 (and subsequent revisions), directs that COVID-19 screening testing is required for service members who refused to receive, who are pending an exemption, or who are exempted from COVID-19 vaccination and are entering a DoD facility. This testing requirement will be executed at least weekly. See FHP 23 (and subsequent revisions) for details.

**21) If I am “high-risk,” do I have to take the vaccine?**

Most “high-risk” medical conditions are suitable for the COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccinations are usually helpful for populations at higher risk for infection and more severe illness complications. Members may consult with their Primary Care Provider (PCP) or supporting MTF/RMU (ARC/ANG) for appropriate plan of vaccination.

**22) If I have religious objections, do I have to take the vaccine?**

Only service members with an approved exemption do not have to take the vaccine. Refer to DAFI 52-201 and AFI 48-110 for information on requesting an exemption from the vaccination requirement for reasons of religious accommodation. Members who submit a religious waiver to not receive the vaccination will be exempt from the requirement while their request is pending. If the waiver is denied, the member will be required to be vaccinated. Commanders must counsel the requestor after receiving the request that noncompliance with immunization requirements may adversely affect readiness for deployment, assignment, travel, or result in other administrative or disciplinary consequences. Counseling must be documented in a memorandum and included with the religious accommodation request package.

**23) If I am pregnant, do I have to take the vaccine?**

Pregnant Service members are recommended to receive COVID-19 vaccination consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM); however, a pregnant Service member with concerns about vaccination during pregnancy may pursue a temporary medical exemption following vaccine counseling from her healthcare provider, as per paragraph 2-6.a.(1)(a) of AFI 48-110. There is no data that COVID-19 vaccination is unsafe for members who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Pregnant and breastfeeding members are at higher risk for severe illness or hospitalization from COVID-19 infection.

**24) If I am planning to become pregnant, do I have to take the vaccine?**

Yes. There is no data that COVID-19 vaccination is unsafe for members who plan to become pregnant. Members considering pregnancy should consult with their specialty care doctor or primary care doctor if they have concerns regarding the COVID-19 vaccination.

**25) If I am post-partum but breastfeeding, do I have to take the vaccine?**

Yes (unless under medical exemption). There is no data that COVID-19 vaccination is unsafe for members who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Pregnant and breastfeeding members are at higher risk for severe illness or hospitalization from COVID-19 infection. Service members who are breast-feeding should consult their primary care doctor if they have concerns regarding the COVID-19 vaccination.

**26) If I've already had COVID-19, do I still need to take the vaccine?**

Yes. Vaccinated individuals have significantly lower rates of reinfection and illness than those who have been previously infected but remain unvaccinated. Having had COVID-19 does not mean you are immune to future infections and does not meet the requirement to be vaccinated.

**27) If I have a history of allergic reactions to vaccinations, do I have to take the vaccine?**

Reactions to other vaccines do not necessarily predict a reaction to COVID-19 vaccines. Those who have had a reaction to a specific COVID-19 vaccine, or one of the ingredients in the vaccine, should not continue receiving that particular vaccine. As medical conditions vary for individuals, members should consult with their primary care providers for special condition concerns.

**28) What conditions will allow me to obtain a medical exemption? (also see Question 18)**

As medical conditions vary for individuals, members should consult with their primary care providers for special condition concerns.

**29) How safe is the vaccine?**

COVID-19 vaccines have proven to be safe and very effective in preventing hospitalizations and deaths. As we do with other deadly infections, we want to protect our force through the best tool available, vaccination. Required vaccination to protect the force is routine for DoD, including annual influenza vaccination. The COMIRNATY® (Pfizer) vaccine is fully licensed by the FDA. The two other EUA vaccines have been thoroughly tested and found to be safe and effective in preventing severe COVID-19 symptoms. All three vaccines continue to undergo continuous and intense safety monitoring.

**30) Will my medical records list accurate information so that if I experience short or long-term adverse events associated with the vaccine, I will be able to receive appropriate health care in the future? Will the government pay for this health care?**

Yes. All immunizations are recorded on a DD2766c and kept in the Service member's medical record. Members experiencing adverse effects related to vaccinations or any illness, injury, disease, operative procedure, or hospitalization, are responsible for promptly reporting information to their commander or supervisor and supporting medical facility. If lasting adverse effects are found to be related to vaccination, your medical records will be noted and appropriate care provided. Members of the Air Reserve Component who believe they have suffered adverse effects of a military vaccination should consult their commanders for a line of duty determination to appropriately reflect the source of any purported injury.

**31)** I feel uncomfortable and not safe receiving the vaccine due to the limited amount of knowledge on potential long term effects of the vaccine. Can I be given a waiver until more information is known on the possible future effects?

No. We have a full range of resources – to include individual and professional medical advice – to help service members understand the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine.

**32)** Can I choose which type of vaccine to take (Pfizer, J&J, Moderna)?

Service members can elect to receive any FDA licensed or authorized (EUA) vaccine to meet the requirement. If vaccinations are being given on a mandatory basis, the only vaccine that may be used at this time is the COMIRNATY® (Pfizer) vaccine. (COMIRNATY® has the same formulation and can be used interchangeably with the FDA authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Providers can use doses distributed under the EUA to administer the vaccination series as if the doses were the licensed vaccine according to the FDA. Other vaccines may be added to this list in the future.)

**33)** If I've had a monoclonal antibody preparation or Convalescent Plasma, do I still need to be vaccinated?

Yes. Currently, there is no data on safety or efficacy of COVID-19 vaccination in persons who received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma as part of COVID-19 treatment. The CDC recommends that COVID-19 vaccination be deferred for 90 days after receipt to avoid a possible impact on COVID-19 vaccination by prior antibody treatment. However, providers and patients can consider COVID-19 vaccination in such treated individuals within this 90-day window on a case-by-case basis with shared clinical decision-making for Force Health Protection and other important vaccination needs. (also see Question 22)

**34)** If I was part of the trial vaccination group, do I still need to take the FDA mandated vaccination?

Service members that were part of a vaccine trial, should now be aware of whether they were in the treatment or placebo group. Service members that were in the actual vaccine treatment group will be required to provide proof of vaccination and have that recorded in their military health records. Service members that were part of the placebo group are required to be vaccinated.

**35)** I am currently awaiting a second dose of the Moderna vaccine. I do not want to take another shot. Will I be required to take the second shot even though it is not currently a mandatory vaccine?

No, but refusing to be fully vaccinated, without a medical exemption or religious accommodation, will be handled the same as if you are unvaccinated. (also see Question 1)



**36) What if I lost my CDC vaccination card? Am I required to get the vaccine again?**

If a service member was vaccinated outside of the military health system, and/or their health records do not indicate that they've been vaccinated, they will need to provide proof of vaccination. If they cannot show proof of vaccination either with a CDC card or other vaccination records, they may be required to be vaccinated. It is suggested that members keep a copy of their vaccination documentation in an electronic form such as a picture on their phone or in their email. Service members should get this documentation added to their military health records as soon as possible.

**37) Can I get titers drawn and be considered current with the vaccine?**

No. Titers are considered unreliable and not an FDA approved method to prove immunity to COVID-19. There is NO titer level that is considered to represent immunity from COVID-19.

**38) Will vaccination be required for TDY or Deployment to other countries?**



DoD policy currently restricts domestic and international official travel for unvaccinated personnel to “mission-critical” as defined by the SecAF. DAF personnel who are not vaccinated may be non-deployable based on specific mission circumstances. Pursuant to Air Force and DoD policy, approved exemptions may be modified or rescinded to enable member TDY or deployment if mission needs dictate.

**39) Will I require a booster if I have already received the vaccine?**

The DoD will follow CDC guidance for booster shots.

**40) Can I request a different type of vaccine based on what I feel will be good for me?**

If the medical treatment facility has more than one type of vaccine you may request that vaccine based on availability. If a service member decides to use a vaccine outside of the military health system, they will need to provide proof of vaccination. Service members should get this documentation added to their military health records as soon as possible.

**LOGISTICS**

**41) Do I have to be vaccinated to fly on the Patriot Express? How about other carriers?**

All service members are required to be vaccinated. Other travelers aboard the Patriot Express, other government-contracted carriers, or commercial airlines, are not required to be vaccinated at this time. However, passengers must meet point-of-entry vaccination/testing requirements outlined in the Foreign Clearance Guide (e.g. negative PCR test within 72 hours).

**42) Do I have to be vaccinated to sign up for Space-A travel?**

All service members are required to be vaccinated. Due to COVID-19 associated restrictions, only certain categories remain eligible to seek Space-A travel unless an exception is provided. See Table 3 of DoDI 4515.13 Air Transportation Eligibility for more information.

**43) What if the COMIRNATY® (Pfizer) vaccine can't be shipped to my base? Can I be asked to take the vaccine while TDY or at Formal School?**

Yes. You may be ordered to take the vaccine while on TDY or at a Formal School. In this situation, your Commander would coordinate with the TDY location or school.

**44) Now that the vaccine is mandatory, will the movers that pack my household goods be required to be vaccinated?**

US Transportation Command, the DoD Personal Property Program Manager, is reviewing the mandatory vaccine requirements and its application to personnel that provide services to the Government, and will publish guidance upon completion of their review.

**LEGAL**

**45) Can my chain-of-command require proof of vaccination?**

For service members, vaccination status is captured in DoD medical health records, which commanders, first sergeants, or a commander's designee can utilize to verify vaccination status. The member's commander, first sergeant, or commander's designee may also ask the member to provide proof of vaccination status in order to effectively accomplish their force health protection mission and implement force health protection policies.

**46) What administrative actions (LOR, Article 15, referral evaluation, etc.) can my chain-of-command take if I refuse vaccine? How will this be enforced uniformly among units?**

Commanders have wide latitude to use the full range of quality force management tools to enforce good order and discipline. Any refusal to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, absent an approved exemption, may be punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. (also covered under questions 1, 11, and 12)

**47) What will happen to my career if I refuse to take the vaccine when it's mandatory?**

Absent an approved medical or administrative exemption (e.g., religious accommodation), any refusal by a service member to receive the COVID-19 vaccine may be punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

48) I work in very close quarters with others. Will civilians in my organization also be required to take the vaccine?

**NEW**

Yes, the Secretary of the Air Force's 8 October 2021 memo references EO 14043 and the DepSecDef 1 October 2021 memo, and mandates all DAF civilian employees to be fully vaccinated, unless exempted. Currently, DAF civilians will not have the option to test as an alternative to the vaccine. DoD and DAF are updating guidance and policy to implement measures for mandatory vaccinations for civilian employees.

49) Who is allowed to ask me if I'm vaccinated?

Commanders, first sergeants, and commander's designees have a need to know if their military members are vaccinated. They may ask their military members and expect a truthful response. If a military member is suspected of misconduct (e.g., being not fully vaccinated and not wearing a mask), he or she must be advised of their rights under Article 31, UCMJ.

50) If discharged, will it be characterized as Honorable if I refuse the vaccine?

Characterization of service upon discharge is based on the quality of the member's service as reflected in the military record of the current enlistment or period of service including personal conduct, performance of duty, and the reason for separation.

51) How long will I have to decide if I'll get the vaccine before disciplinary action will happen?

Uniformed members are required to obey all lawful orders issued to them, and their actions should be informed by the SecAF's vaccination timeline.

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

52) What mental health, chaplain, first sergeant resources are available to members who find themselves in hardship after vaccine refusal?

**NEW**

Commanders should proactively make available chaplains and first sergeants and the opportunity to consult with an Area Defense Counsel for members who initially refuse to be vaccinated. Additionally, during any period that mandatory vaccinations are taking place, commanders will ensure that mental health professionals are on-call and available to support.

53) FDA licensed COVID-19 vaccines have become mandatory. They're labeled a "commander's program" and affect unit readiness. Is the acceptance rate a reflection of leadership ability? Will military providers be as likely to report adverse reactions or declinations?

**NEW**

As vaccination is now mandatory, commanders are tasked with maintaining the medical readiness of their unit. Adverse reactions are reported directly by the member in VAERS. They will also be entered into military health records.

**54) How long will unvaccinated members be required to wear a mask?**

Personnel who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19, and others as determined by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, will be required to wear a mask in accordance with DoD Force Health Protection Guidance (FHPG). As conditions change, DoD FHPG will be updated.

**55) Will there be a grace period from FDA approval and when the vaccine is mandatory?**

No, the requirement is effective upon SecAF implementation of DoD memo, dated 24 August 2021, that mandates COVID-19 vaccination for service members. For those who do not voluntarily comply, unit commanders will issue lawful orders to be vaccinated as soon as feasible. Commanders will weigh risk to mission against individual Airmen and Guardians location and ability to be vaccinated. The Defense Health Agency and Air Force Medical Service will move COMIRNATY® (Pfizer) vaccine as required to quickly and effectively vaccinate the remaining force.

**56) Will all new recruits be given the vaccine upon entry into the service?**

Yes. All new recruits will be vaccinated through entry-level in-processing (BMT, OTS, etc.).

**57) Will Cadets at USAFA be required to take the vaccine? What about AFROTC cadets?**

Yes. For the purpose of medical readiness, USAFA cadets are considered regular [active component] service members. AFROTC cadets on scholarship who have signed service contracts are members of the Air Force Reserve are subject to the same requirements for mandatory vaccinations as all Airmen and Guardians.

### **TOTAL FORCE (Specific)**

**58) If I refuse the vaccine on a UTA or in other inactive duty status, can I be ordered to Annual Tour or other active duty and compelled to be vaccinated?**

Yes, you may be ordered to Annual Tour with the appropriate notice. You will be expected to comply with the requirement to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. You may also do so at a civilian provider of your choice. If you elect to receive the vaccine at a civilian provider, an FDA approved or authorized (EUA) vaccine will satisfy the mandate. You will need to provide appropriate paperwork to your Unit Health Monitor to be entered in AHLTA and ASIMS for tracking purposes.

**59) Is there a difference if I refuse the vaccine on inactive or active duty status?**

No. Members of the reserve components, in either status, are required to comply with this mandate.

**60)** If I refuse the vaccine, will I be paid? Can I be “red-lined” and given an unexcused drill period? Will I be put in “no pay, no points” status?

You will be paid for any duty completed but could be then excused and sent home pending further action. Any subsequent drill periods could be marked as unexcused if the member does not have prior approval from the commander. Your commander could also place you in a “No Pay No Points” duty status for failing to meet medical readiness requirements.

**61)** What happens if I stop attending drill because I do not want to be vaccinated?

Drill periods missed without prior approval of the commander will be marked unexcused. Refusing to be vaccinated is not an acceptable excuse for not attending drill.

**62)** Do I have to fill out a form declining the vaccine? If so, will that also be in my VA health records?

Yes. Completing DHA Form 207 is required for all members, even those who decline the vaccination. The form will be retained in your permanent health records.

**63)** I’m an IMA. Can my active component unit stop my participation if I refuse the vaccine?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine is a mandatory requirement. If a member does not meet medical readiness standards participation could be curtailed.

**64)** If I refuse the vaccine, will I be allowed to participate in order to get a ‘good year’ for retirement?

It depends. The COVID-19 vaccine is a mandatory requirement. If a member does not meet medical readiness standards participation could be curtailed.

**65)** I’m at a unit that only has FDA authorized (EUA) vaccines. If the active component Military Treatment Facility (MTF) gets an FDA licensed vaccine will reserve component members have to take it as well?

Yes. On an installation, the active component MTF and reserve Medical Unit will coordinate to ensure that there is enough COMIRNATY (Pfizer) vaccine on hand for all unvaccinated members. The Secretary of Defense’s direction establishes a requirement for service members to be fully vaccinated. Service members can elect to receive any FDA licensed or authorized (EUA) vaccine to meet that requirement. If vaccinations are being given on a mandatory basis, the only vaccine that may be used at this time is the COMIRNATY® (Pfizer) vaccine. If you do not now have the COMIRNATY® (Pfizer) vaccine at your installation or location, your servicing Military Treatment Facility can advise if or when it will be available. (COMIRNATY® has the same formulation and can be used interchangeably with the FDA authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Providers can use doses distributed under the EUA to administer the vaccination series as if the doses were the licensed vaccine according the FDA guidance. Other vaccines may be added to this list in the future.) Members can always choose to get vaccinated on their own or wait for adequate supply at a DoD facility. MTFs will have adequate vaccine supplies to meet the SecAF’s vaccination timeline.

66) I'm an Air Reserve Technician (ART). In civilian status can I be asked to take the vaccine?

**NEW**

Yes, the Secretary of the Air Force's 8 October 2021 memo references EO 14043 and the DepSecDef 1 October 2021 memo, and mandates all DAF civilian employees, including ARTs, to be fully vaccinated, unless exempted. Currently, you will not have the option to test as an alternative to the vaccine. DoD and DAF are currently updating guidance and policy to implement measures for mandatory vaccinations for civilian employees. As an ART, if you ultimately refuse the vaccine, you will not meet your conditions of employment and will not remain qualified for your position.

67) Can a member of the reserve component use an active component MTF to receive the COVID-19 vaccination while not in a paid duty status?

Yes.

68) If a member of the reserve component receives a COVID-19 vaccination off-base while not in paid duty status, are they responsible for the cost? Can they seek treatment through TRICARE or the military medical system if they suffer complications? What about through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)?

Service members, regardless of status, who require medical attention as a result of COVID-19 vaccination may utilize the military medical system. Determinations on benefits from the VHA or TRICARE will be made by each respectively.

Most civilian vaccination programs are offering the COVID-19 vaccination free of charge. Members of the SELRES may utilize vaccination programs outside of MTFs and DoD vaccination sites, such as county and state programs.

69) Do ANG members need to comply with the SecAF vaccine mandate if the Governor of their State has issued a prohibition on vaccine mandates? (alternate question: Do ANG members need to comply with the SecAF vaccine mandate when in Title 32 status?)

**NEW**

Yes. The Secretary of the Air Force, pursuant to his statutory authority under Title 10, United States Code, and Department of Defense policy, establishes readiness requirements for the DAF. ANG members are required to maintain readiness while in a Title 32 status, and in order to be eligible to deploy.