



## UPDATED MASK WEAR FAQs

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q1. May a commander or supervisor require proof of vaccination in order to allow an employee to go maskless?**

**A1.** No. The vaccines are currently voluntary and per DoD policy, as a general matter, supervisors may **not** ask employees if they have been vaccinated. Compelling employees to provide proof of vaccination status undermines the voluntary nature of the vaccine and vaccination status.

**Q2. If everyone in a workplace is vaccinated, doesn't that mean it's safe for everyone to go maskless?**

**A2.** The CDC has stated that the vaccines are effective at preventing COVID-19 disease (especially severe illness and death), and at reducing the risk of people spreading COVID-19. At this time, however, the CDC does not know the duration of vaccine protection, whether these vaccines will have similar efficacy for persons with certain autoimmune medical conditions, or whether the current vaccines have similar efficacy against new variants of the virus. This is why no assumption can or should be made regarding the vaccination status of any employee based on their decision to continue wearing a mask.

**Q3. I have a young child at home who is considered at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and although I'm vaccinated, I am continuing to wear a mask at work to help keep my child safe. My supervisor asked me why I'm still wearing a mask. Can he do that?**

**A3.** No. Generally, Commanders and supervisors may NOT ask about an employee's vaccination status. This includes inquiring as to why an employee continues to wear a mask. Managers should remind employees that it is also inappropriate for coworkers to make such inquiries.

**Q4. If I continue to wear a mask (either due to the mandate or by personal choice), I'm worried my co-workers will harass me. Is there anything I can do?**

**Q4.** Inappropriate conduct in the form of harassing or bullying behavior should be reported to your supervisor immediately. Managers should remind employees that it is inappropriate for coworkers to inquire, or to make assumptions regarding, the vaccination status of another employee, or to take any type of harassing, bullying, or threatening actions towards another employee for any reason, and specifically for reasons related to vaccination status.

**Q5. Our Commander wants to be cautious and has only approved us to go maskless “if everyone in our office is vaccinated”. Today, everyone showed up to work maskless except me. She hasn’t asked me if I’m vaccinated, but I’m concerned that she’ll assume I’m not vaccinated. Isn’t mandating me to wear a mask essentially identifying my vaccination status and therefore a violation of my medical privacy?**

**A5.** No. There is no legal medical privacy issue with mandating mask wear for non-vaccinated persons. No assumption can or should be made regarding the vaccination status of any employee based on their decision to continue wearing a mask. There are many possible reasons a person may continue mask wearing (other than not being vaccinated), including but not limited to: medical conditions that may cause lower efficacy for a vaccinated person; a desire to protect others who are not, or cannot be, vaccinated (since vaccinated persons may still be asymptomatic transmitters of the virus); or a desire to protect oneself from diseases other than COVID-19.

**Q6. I have an employee who bragged that they would “never get the vaccination”, and now they are showing up to work maskless. What can I do?**

**A6.** Immediately contact your servicing CPS (Employee Relations Specialist) and your servicing legal office. At a minimum, you should remind the employee that anyone who is not vaccinated and who fails to wear a mask as directed is in violation of DoD and DAF policy, and such violation may result in disciplinary action. If there is sufficient evidence that an employee is in violation of policy, disciplinary action may be taken. Consultation with your servicing CPS and legal office is critical to properly investigating suspected misconduct of this nature as well as determining if/when disciplinary action may be appropriate.

**Q7. Where do supervisors or Commanders go if they have additional questions?**

**A7.** Commanders or supervisors should consult their servicing CPS (Employee Relations) and/or Legal offices if they have additional questions.