



Illinois Heartland Library System

To: IHLS Board of Directors
From: Leslie Bednar
Date: November 17, 2021
Re: COVID-19 Procedures and IHLS Staff Safety Update

At our October 26, 2021, board meeting there was a suggestion that all new IHLS employees be required to be vaccinated prior to beginning employment. We share the update below regarding our efforts to keep our employees and their communities safe.

At this time, our recommendation is to continue with our procedures regarding testing and vaccinations. When more information is available regarding the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Emergency Temporary Standard, we may elect to change the procedure at that time.

Bi-weekly testing update

As of November 11th, we have completed three weeks of testing for unvaccinated employees. Testing has been running smoothly and both Managers and Human Resources are involved in the process. The percentage of unvaccinated employees remains at 16% for an employee population of 100 employees. (11/9/2021)

New hires and vaccinations

Since the rolling out of our procedures on testing/vaccinations on September 10, 2021, all new hires have submitted a copy of their COVID-19 vaccination card showing that we have a 100% vaccination rate for all new employees.

Mask wearing in all IHLS Offices

We continue to abide by Governor J.B. Pritzker's mask wearing policy indoors, and currently all employees always wear masks in the building. We understand that the governor's ruling states masks may be taken off when in an office when you are alone. To be fair with all employees, even those that work in open areas, we are always wearing masks indoors except when eating or drinking.

IHLS will be hosting a Vaccination & Booster clinic at each hub location in December

We were approached by four field representatives from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency at our Edwardsville hub to ask if we would be interested in holding a COVID-19 Vaccination/Booster clinic. We are scheduling each location to hold a vaccination/booster COVID-19 clinic for our employees and our local communities.

IMAGINING TOMORROW ~ DELIVERING POSSIBILITIES TODAY!

Contactless delivery

To further guard the safety and health of our member library community, IHLS continues contactless delivery to the vast majority of our member libraries. We pair this protocol with a rigid hygiene procedure at all offices in regard to handling member library materials.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS)

Please note: [*Federal Appeals Court Blocks Vaccine-or-Testing Policy November 6, 2021*](#)

These changes will need to be made to our current procedures:

- We will change from bi-weekly to weekly testing for unvaccinated workers beginning January 4th, 2022.
- If an employee decides to get vaccinated, employers must give up to 4 hours for travel time and time it takes to get the vaccination. (Our current policy lists only up to 2 hours of time off.)
- To avoid frequent changes to our COVID-19 procedures, we have decided to adhere to the new OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards if our employee population is from 95-100 employees. We understand that this mandate falls under the 100 or more-employee headcount rule.

OSHA ETS guidelines we followed before new standards were released on November 4, 2021:

- All unvaccinated workers must begin wearing masks by December 5. Ensure that each employee who is not fully vaccinated wears a face covering when indoors or when occupying a vehicle with another person for work purposes, except in certain limited circumstances. *(We are currently in compliance as all employees must wear masks at all times for the safety and prevention of spreading COVID-19.)*
- Employers must pay employees for the time it takes to get vaccinated and recover from any side effects that prevent them from working. *(This is currently in place for employees under our COVID-19 Leave Policy.)*
- Companies are not required to pay for or provide the tests unless they are otherwise required to by state or local laws or in labor union contracts. *(We currently state within our testing/vaccination procedure that the employee is responsible for any testing costs related to employer COVID-19 testing procedures.)*
- Implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy, with or without an exception allowing employees to instead undergo weekly COVID-19 testing (beginning January 4, 2022) and wear a face covering at the workplace (beginning December 5, 2021). *(Our procedures were created September 10, 2021. We will issue updates and include our procedures in our safety training manual, outline the new standards, and include information on vaccination.)*