

## **DFES General Circular No: 157/2021**

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### **FACING THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19**

To all staff and volunteers

The health and safety of all DFES staff and volunteers is of the highest priority. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges to how we deliver emergency services in the event of an outbreak.

To ensure we maintain emergency services and core business delivery, new measures will be introduced that will help keep staff and volunteers safe and help us to protect the communities we serve.

From 1 December 2021, all DFES staff and volunteers will be required to have received at least their first COVID-19 vaccination with the intention to become fully vaccinated or become subject to infection control measures.

These measures will be outlined in an Infection Prevention Policy that is being developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders including Associations for all services, unions and WALGA.

The Policy will be communicated to everyone and will clearly outline the infection control measures that will be in place for staff and volunteers who choose not to get vaccinated and may include the wearing of masks, regular testing or redeployment to alternative locations.

Western Australia's Chief Health Officer Dr Andrew Robertson provided me with health advice on Friday that supports both the continued encouragement of vaccinations for emergency services and the use of infection control measures.

A comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions can be accessed on the [Volunteer Hub](#) and [Intranet](#).

I strongly encourage all DFES personnel to get vaccinated as it is our best defence against the spread of COVID-19.

In responding to emergencies, we have a duty of care to ensure we are protecting both the community and our people. Vaccination plays a vital role in reducing the risk of spread during these interactions.

The protection of our most vulnerable people in the community, including those in residential care facilities and remote communities, is one of utmost importance.

We must not put our community at greater risk because we have not taken the necessary precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19.



# FOR A SAFER STATE

## **Gathering COVID-19 vaccination status information**

We have begun the process of requesting information about vaccination status from all staff and volunteers as we lead into the high-threat season, no matter what your role is.

DFES is setting up systems to accurately and securely record vaccination status of staff and volunteers.

Only information pertinent to business continuity and operational purpose will be gathered.

As an emergency services agency we are required to collect this information to ensure our capability to maintain emergency services delivery and inform our decision-making in incident response. You can be assured the information gathered will only be used for these purposes.

Staff who participate in the State Duty Roster or a Pre-Formed Team will have received a text message this week requesting information about their vaccination status. This information will assist in DFES' planning for incident response and identify operational and business areas that could be impacted in the event of an outbreak.

One of the measures that has been implemented is that any staff member or volunteer who has not been fully vaccinated will not be eligible to be deployed interstate or internationally to provide emergency services response.

## **More information about the COVID-19 vaccine**

Information about the vaccines is readily available on the [WA Health website](#) and [Australian Government Department of Health website](#).

For further information about COVID-19 vaccination program and the rollout for emergency services personnel, visit the COVID-19 information pages on the [Intranet](#) and [Volunteer Hub](#) that will continue to be updated regularly.

If you have any further questions you can direct them to our COVID-19 Incident Response Team through [covid19@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:covid19@dfes.wa.gov.au).

Help protect yourself, your colleagues and your loved ones by getting vaccinated, always using good hygiene, stay at home if you are unwell and get tested if you have symptoms and check in using the SafeWA App.

**DARREN KLEMM AFSM**  
**COMMISSIONER**