

Rhode Island Immunization, Testing, and Health Screening for Health Care Workers Regulations

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a testing component to the regulation?

No.

Who does this regulation apply to?

This regulation applies to any person who: is temporarily or permanently employed by a health care facility, serves as a volunteer in a health care facility, or is compensated by a third party that has an agreement with the health care facility to provide staffing services, and has or may have direct patient contact in that health care facility or if not directly involved in patient care are exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted from person to person.

Can my health center receive an extension of the seven-day compliance period?

Currently there is no available extension permitted in the regulations. Health care facilities have seven days from the promulgation of the regulation to put measures in place to ensure compliance with these requirements.

Under which conditions do people need to wear N95 masks? Do employees without direct patient contact also need to wear N95 masks?

If a health care worker is not up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, they must wear a NIOSH-approved N95 mask during periods in which COVID-19 prevalence in the state is greater than or equal to 50 cases per 100,000 people per week, as reported by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

How does this regulation relate to the regulation requiring health care workers and health care providers by vaccinated for COVID-19 by October 1, 2021?

The [Rhode Island Immunization, Testing, and Health Screening for Health Care Workers Regulation](#) (216-RICR-20-15-9) **replaces** emergency regulation 216-RICR-20-15-8.

Under the new regulation, can an employee choose not to be vaccinated for any reason and instead wear an N95 during periods in which COVID-19 prevalence in the state is greater than or equal to 50 cases per 100,000 people per week?

Yes.

Under the new regulation, can a health facility hire people who are not vaccinated, but are willing to get vaccinated while employed?

Yes.

If an employee has completed their primary series of vaccine (meaning they have obtained the single dose vaccine or both doses of a series) but are not yet eligible for a booster dose, must the employee wear an N95 mask (assuming prevalence meets the threshold) until they are boosted, which could be several months?

If an employee has completed their primary series and is not yet eligible for a booster dose, they are considered up to date and are not required to wear a mask. Once the employee becomes eligible for the booster, they are no longer up to date until they have received the booster and would be required to wear an N95 mask.

Do employees with approved medical exemptions need to continue testing two times a week when they are wearing N95s?

No.

How do we know what the prevalence rate is in the state? How often are these data updated?

COVID-19 data can be found at health.ri.gov/data/covid-19. At this page, you will find the total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past seven days. These data are updated Monday through Friday by approximately 3:00 p.m.