



EOP No:	OP-SCWA-5
Eff. Date:	8-16-21
Rev. Date:	N/A

SUFFOLK COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY OPERATION PROCEDURE

Item	COVID-19 RESPONSE: IMPLEMENTATION OF MANDATORY SCREENING FOR NON-VACCINATED EMPLOYEES
Department Implementing	All Departments
Author	Jeff Kleinman, Director of General Services
Approving Executive	Donna Mancuso, Deputy CEO for Administration
Approving Executive	Jeff Szabo, Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE:

To establish procedures for a SARS-CoV-2 testing program. Under the program employees who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will be tested once a pay period for SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19.

BACKGROUND:

SCWA is implementing a multi-phase COVID-19 Response Plan. Under Phase X of the Plan, issued on August 9, 2021, all employees are to be vaccinated or undergo weekly SARS-CoV-2 testing.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

Effective August 16, 2021, this Operation Procedure implements mandatory weekly COVID-19 screening for employees who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

SCHEDULING:

Employees who are not fully vaccinated, except for employees in Huntington and East Hampton, will be assigned a time and location for their COVID-19 screening at Hauppauge, Bay Shore, Oakdale, Coram, or Westhampton. Staff from Great River will be scheduled at Oakdale. Employees from East Hampton and Huntington will need to go to off-site screening facilities. The Supervisor of an employee who is not fully vaccinated may adjust the employee's test schedule.

ON-SITE TESTING

Each Department will be provided with the appropriate number of time slots for their employees that are not fully vaccinated. Supervisors will assign their employees to be tested to a designated time slot. These employees must be screened during their scheduled time slot unless they are out of work or excused for work purposes by their Supervisor. Should an employee miss their

scheduled time slot for Supervisor-approved work, sick/personal/vacation time, or other leave, then they must go to an off-site location in that same pay period unless otherwise approved by their Supervisor. If an employee is out of work for an entire pay period, they must consult with their Supervisor to determine their next scheduled test.

Missing or showing up late to your scheduled time slot, without approval, will result in immediate disciplinary action.

Site	Day	Testing Times	Notes
Hauppauge	Tuesday	1:30pm-4:30pm	
Bayshore	Tuesday	7:00am-8:00am	*After Labor Day time start moves back 1 hour (8:00am start)
Oakdale/Great River	Wednesday	7:00am-11:30am	*After Labor Day time start moves back 1 hour (8:00am start)
Coram	Wednesday	1:30pm-4:30pm	
Westhampton	Thursday	7:00am-9:00am	*After Labor Day time start moves back 1 hour (8:00am start)
Oakdale/Great River	Thursday	7:00am-11:30am	*After Labor Day time start moves back 1 hour (8:00am start)

OFF-SITE TESTING

Employees in Huntington Office and the East Hampton Office must utilize off site testing. Employees who miss their scheduled on-site testing time must also utilize off-site testing site for that pay period.

Employees who utilize off-site screening are responsible for scheduling and going to an approved off-site screening facility to receive a weekly PCR test at a time approved by their Supervisor. Once received by the employee, the results must be submitted to HumanResources@scwa.com within 24 hours.

Unless otherwise approved, failure to take a PCR test and submit the results to the Human Resources Department each week will result in immediate disciplinary action.

LOCATIONS:

ON-SITE

The following will be the weekly designated locations for each on-site screening:

- Hauppauge - Tuesday - Education Center Kitchen and office across the hall from kitchen
- Bay Shore - Tuesday - PC Shape-Up Room
- Oakdale/Great River-Wednesday & Thursday-Trailer behind CM building (trailer closest to CM)
- Coram- Wednesday - Building # 5 Pine Barrens Office & Training Room #3
- Westhampton - Thursday - Operations Conference Room

OFF-SITE

The following will be the designated acceptable locations for employees utilizing off-site screening because they are the closest to each SCWA office and participate in the Empire Plan. Other test sites are acceptable, but no more than one hour will be permitted to obtain a test. The employee must make an appointment for all locations:

East Hampton-

- Go Health Urgent Care – Bridgehampton: 2044 Montauk Hwy, Bridgehampton, N.Y. 11932
Phone: (631) 315-6755

Huntington-

- Go Health Urgent Care – Huntington: 241 E. Main Street, Huntington, N.Y. 11743
Phone: (631) 812-2873
- ProHealth Urgent Care – Huntington: 339 Main Street, Huntington, N.Y. 11743
Phone: (631) 470-9000

Hauppauge-

- Walgreens – Store #7628: 10 W Main Street, Smithtown, N.Y. 11787
Phone: (631) 724-0381
- Go Health Urgent Care – Smithtown: 1 Miller Place Suite C, Smithtown N.Y. 11787
Phone: (631) 604-4024

Bay Shore-

- City MD – North Sunrise Urgent Care: 1757 Sunrise HWY, Bay Shore, N.Y. 11706
Phone: (516) 453-0172
- City MD – South Sunrise Urgent Care: 1850 Sunrise HWY, Bay Shore, N.Y. 11706
Phone: (631) 581-5900

Oakdale/Great River-

- GoHealth Urgent Care – Sayville: 5171 Sunrise HWY, Bohemia, N.Y. 11716
Phone: (631) 493-2942
- City MD – Sayville Urgent Care: 5600 Sunrise HWY, Sayville, N.Y. 11782
Phone: (631) 563-7828

Coram-

- CVS – Coram: 1710 Route 112, Coram, N.Y. 11716
Phone: (631) 476-5360
- City MD – Selden Urgent Care: 996 Middle Country Rd, Selden, N.Y. 11784
Phone: (631) 736-5900

Westhampton-

- Walgreens – Store #9496: 1196 Old Country Rd, Riverhead, N.Y. 11901
Phone: (631) 208-0239
- City MD – Riverhead Urgent Care: 999 Old Country Rd, Riverhead, N.Y. 11901
Phone: (631) 284-5900

PROCEDURE:

ON-SITE TESTING

Employees that are not fully vaccinated will be assigned a weekly testing time and location. These employees must report to their site's screening location at their specific scheduled time.

The employees must have their employee ID as well as their insurance card or a picture of their insurance card on a mobile device when arriving at their on-site screening location.

Upon arrival they will be met by a representative of Northwell Health, the provider retained to perform the test, SCWA Safety, or SCWA Human Resources. They will be required to register and complete a health questionnaire. **All fields must be completed when registering. The employee must sign off on the waiver to have the results shared with the SCWA Human Resources Department.**

Employees must follow the directions of the staff performing the test.

If an employee wishes to do this on their own device, they may do so at any time the week of their scheduled time slot prior to their appointment. They must bring the same device with them to the testing site and follow the directions of the staff performing the test.

A separate communication will be sent out providing the link and QR Code to the registration web site.

After completing registration, the employee will be directed to screening area. A medical professional will administer a test. After the test is complete the employee should report back to work immediately.

This process must be completed every week unless an employee is otherwise excused.

OFF-SITE TESTING

Employees utilizing off-site testing must call or go online to make an appointment at an approved off-site location nearest to their work location. The employee must obtain a PCR test. The time of the appointment must be approved by their Supervisor if done during working hours. **Employees will be given one hour for both travel and time to take the test and return to work.** Once the results are received by the employee, they will have 24 hours to submit the results to the Human Resources Department via email at HumanResources@scwa.com.

They must have their state issued ID as well as their insurance card upon arrival at the off-site screening location.

The employee must follow whatever guidelines/rules the off-site screening location has in place. After the PCR test is complete the employee should report back to work immediately.

This process will need to be completed every week.

TEST RESULTS:

ON-SITE TEST RESULTS

Employees and Human Resources should receive their results within 24 hours of their screening appointment.

Negative result: No action required.

Positive result: Employee must inform their Supervisor that they must leave work immediately. The employee that tested positive should leave work ensuring not to enter any SCWA building. SCWA Human Resources Department staff will contact the employee with further instructions.

OFF-SITE TEST RESULTS

Employees should receive results within 36 hours of their screening appointment.

Negative result: Employee will need to submit proof of a negative PCR test result within 24 hours of receipt of the results.

Positive result: Employee must inform their Supervisor and Human Resources Department immediately. If they are at work, they must leave work immediately. The employee that tested positive should leave work ensuring not to enter any SCWA building. Employee will need to submit proof of a positive PCR test result immediately. SCWA Human Resources Department staff will contact the employee with further instructions.

The following are the Frequently Asked Questions and Answers issued on August 11, 2021.

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers:

What is SCWA's new policy regarding COVID-19 vaccinations?

All employees are expected to be vaccinated under the new policy, which is Phase X of SCWA's COVID-19 Response Plan.

When will the new policy take effect?

The policy is in effect immediately. Weekly testing is expected to begin on Monday, August 16. For everyone's safety, any employee not fully vaccinated by that date must be tested on a weekly basis. However, this accommodation is subject to be discontinued if a significant number of employees still decline to be vaccinated, if pandemic conditions warrant stricter vaccination measures, or if the testing program becomes too disruptive to the workday of unvaccinated employees.

If I choose to not get vaccinated, how will the weekly testing work?

SCWA will establish a program consisting of both on-site and off-site testing, both during work hours and non-working hours. SCWA will designate the time, place and manner of testing for each employee seeking this accommodation. Employees designated to take a test during a non-working hour will be compensated for up to an hour of time to obtain the test. (These situations should be rare and would have to be preapproved by the employee's immediate supervisor.)

Employees receiving this accommodation must be tested once a week. The results from every test must be provided promptly to Human Resources. Failure to do so will result in the employee's suspension without pay until the test result is provided.

Are there any other requirements for those receiving this accommodation?

Yes. Employees granted the weekly testing accommodation will be required to complete a daily COVID-19 symptom and temperature check.

If I've already had COVID-19 and have not gotten the vaccine, do I still need to be tested weekly?

Yes. A new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicated that survivors of COVID-19 who did not subsequently get a vaccine were more than twice as likely to get reinfected than those who were vaccinated. On the other hand, the study shows that those who've had the virus and get vaccinated experience a dramatic boost in virus-fighting immune cells.

If I choose to not be vaccinated and need to be tested weekly, will I take the test at the same date, time and location each week?

Yes. There will be a schedule for every workstation and testing will occur on a set day of the week. The goal will be to administer tests for those working in field at the beginning or end of their shifts; those working in an office will be tested during the day.

What type of test would I need to take?

At least at the onset, employees would be required to take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, in which a long swab is inserted into the nose to collect respiratory material. There may become a time in which employees can use a self-administered test.

Will health professionals administer the tests?

Health professionals, whether on-site or at an outside facility, will initially administer the PCR tests. If a test that can be self-administered by employees is approved by the Food and Drug Administration, and if the healthcare network we will be contracting with to administer testing (Northwell Health) is able to effectively rollout a self-administered test, employees may be allowed to self-test at some point.

When would test results become available?

Test results, whether conducted by a professional or self-administered, should be available in 24 hours.

Do I need to provide a health card at the testing site?

Yes, you will need to provide your standard NYSHIP health card or other insurance card.

What if I forget to bring the card?

It is recommended that all employees take a picture of their health insurance card and keep it on their personal phone. If an employee does not have the information on the day you are tested, they will be subject to discipline and will have to have a test taken later that week, if possible. Failure to obtain a test within the week will subject the employee to suspension until proof of a test is provided.

What if I'm working less than a full week? Would I still need to get tested that week?

Yes. Any week in which an employee works for any of period time requires that employee to adhere to the weekly testing protocol.

If I'm retiring soon, can I choose to use my accruals until I retire to avoid taking the weekly tests?

No, that is not an acceptable use of accrued time.

Will the new policies impact protocol to visitors to SCWA offices?

Visitors to SCWA property will be required to wear masks at all times.

Are there any exemptions to this policy?

SCWA will provide an employee an exemption and reasonable accommodation if that employee has a documented medical condition that would prevent him or her from getting vaccinated or if the vaccine would violate the employee's sincerely held religious beliefs.

It is our understanding these exemptions require significant documentation.

How do I apply for an exemption?

To apply for an exemption, an employee or prospective employee must fill out an Exemption Request Form that will be made available and submit the completed form to Human Resources. An Exemption Review Committee that is in the process of being formed will consider all exemption requests. The committee will discuss with each applicant their exemption request and notify the applicant in writing whether the exemption has been granted or denied. The decisions are final and not subject to appeal, but applicants whose exemptions have been denied can reapply if new documentation and information become available.

Who will serve on the Exemption Review Committee?

Members of the committee will be chosen by Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Szabo and consist of Deputy CEO for Administration Donna Mancuso and HR staff.

What health conditions would make an employee eligible for a medical exemption?

To receive a medical exemption for the vaccine mandate the physician treating the medical condition must complete the required exemption form and provide supporting documentation explaining the medical reason for the exemption. Each exemption request would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What constitutes a "sincerely held" religious belief?

A religious exemption for the vaccine mandate would require a personal written statement detailing the religious basis for the vaccination objection, explaining why the religious exemption is being sought, the religious principles guiding the objections and the religious basis that prohibits the COVID-19 vaccination.

A signed letter from the leader of your religious congregation attesting to the necessity of a religious exemption is also necessary.

If I have a card I secured online indicating that I have a condition that exempts me from being vaccinated, will I be exempt from the new SCWA vaccination policy?

No. Employees would need to be approved for one of the above-mentioned medical or religious exemptions. As noted, each request for an exemption will be reviewed case by case. Furthermore, if a card secured online is proven to be false, it will be given to the proper authorities and the employee may be subject to civil or criminal penalties.

Why is this new policy necessary?

The Delta variant of the virus is currently rampaging through the country, constituting as many as 98% of all new recent COVID-19 cases in the United States. The pandemic is far from over, as case numbers are rising precipitously, primarily in areas in which vaccination rates are low.

The difference between those vaccinated and unvaccinated regarding the impact of the virus is stark—approximately 97% of all those currently hospitalized with the virus are unvaccinated and more than 99% of recent deaths have been unvaccinated individuals, according to the Surgeon General. We all worked very hard to battle this virus last year; the COVID-19 vaccines have been a remarkable success with extremely high rates of effectiveness; vaccination has proven to be the way that we can put the pandemic behind us for good. As such, it is the policy of SCWA to do everything possible to make sure all our employees are vaccinated.

Will this be the final SCWA policy on vaccinations?

Not necessarily. As noted above, SCWA will constantly review the latest health information about the pandemic, including the New York State and Suffolk County positivity rate for COVID-19 testing. SCWA will also monitor its vaccination rate and the impact of Phase X on operations. These factors will guide SCWA in deciding whether it becomes necessary to discontinue the weekly testing accommodation. If that accommodation is revoked, employees not exempted for medical or religious reasons will be suspended without pay and subsequently terminated for non-compliance with the vaccination mandate.

To re-emphasize: It is now SCWA policy to have a fully vaccinated workforce. It is essential for us to accomplish this in order to protect the health of all employees and ensure the continuity of water service to all SCWA customers.

What constitutes being “fully vaccinated”?

A SCWA employee is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they have received the second dose in a two-dose series (such as Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna) or two weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (such as Johnson&Johnson/Janssen).

Do I still have to undergo the weekly testing if I've had my first shot by August 16?

Yes, in accordance with the answer above, you are not considered to be fully vaccinated until two weeks after you've received the second dose of a two-dose series, so testing will be required until that time.

What if I'm fully vaccinated but don't wish to share that information with SCWA?

Having accurate information about the vaccination status of all employees is essential to protecting everyone's health. As such, any employee who is fully vaccinated and fails to accurately report their vaccination status to SCWA will be suspended without pay for no less than 20 days. If you are already vaccinated, you must submit this information before submitting to weekly testing, or you will be subject to the suspension.

If studies are coming out that vaccinated people can spread COVID, why are only unvaccinated people required to wear masks and answer the questionnaire as COVID cases increase?

We continue to evaluate all scientific data available to us and we are considering all options to protect the health of our employees. And while a new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that the Delta variant produces similar amounts of virus in the vaccinated and unvaccinated, the CDC emphasized the following: vaccinated people appear to be infectious for a shorter period and it is far more likely for the unvaccinated to become infected.

"I want to reiterate, we believe the vast majority of transmission is occurring in unvaccinated people and through unvaccinated people," said CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky.

Additionally, SCWA follows the recommendations of New York State health officials in regard to the COVID-19 protocols. State officials have not to date issued new recommendations pertaining to vaccinated individuals again wearing masks.

All questions not answered in this procedure should be addressed to your supervisor or Human Resources.