

**Suffolk County Water Authority**

**Interoffice Memorandum**

**To:** Chairman, Board Members, and all SCWA Employees  
**From:** Jeffrey W. Szabo, CEO  
**Re:** COVID-19 Response Plan - Phase XIII – Vaccination Requirement, Exemptions and Revised Mandatory Testing Accommodation  
**Date:** October 20, 2021

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have determined that COVID-19 is a “direct threat” to public health.

SCWA has developed a Response Plan to this threat to provide for the safety of its employees and the public it serves.

Phase X established a vaccination mandate for every SCWA employee and Prospective Employee. It also established a mandatory SARS-CoV-2 testing program for unvaccinated employees. Testing under Phase X began on August 17, 2021. SCWA received significant comment on the Phase X requirements and to address them, issued Phase XI on August 25. On September 15, Phase XII was issued to further clarify how SCWA would direct individuals in the Testing Program to test.

This Phase is being issued to modify the Mandatory Testing Accommodation by stating that SCWA will implement a self-administered test if one is made available by Northwell Health, SCWA’s test provider.

## Suffolk County Water Authority

### Guidance – COVID-19 Response Plan - Phase XIII – Vaccination Requirement, Exemptions and Revised Mandatory Testing Accommodation

- Components of Phase XII Plan:
- I. Definition of Vaccinated Employee
  - II. Employee Vaccination Requirement, Exemptions, and Temporary Accommodation for Employees Who are Not Vaccinated
  - III. Exemptions from Mandatory Vaccine Requirement
  - IV. Temporary Accommodation for Employees Who are Not Vaccinated
  - V. Mandatory SARS-CoV-2 Testing Program
  - VI. Cancellation of the Testing Accommodation
  - VII. Implementation, Corrective Action, and Non-Retaliation
  - VIII. Phase XIII Duration

#### I. Definition of Vaccinated Employee

A SCWA employee is considered vaccinated (“Vaccinated”) for COVID-19  $\geq 2$  weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series of Pfizer-BioNTech’s Comirnaty or Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine, or  $\geq 2$  weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine, Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen or as otherwise provided for by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To be deemed Vaccinated, an employee must submit a copy of their vaccination card to Human Resources. The vaccination card should not contain the employee’s medical or genetic information. Human Resources will keep vaccination information confidential. Absent submission of their vaccination card, an employee shall not be deemed Vaccinated no matter whether they have received a COVID-19 vaccine.

#### II. Employee Vaccination Requirement, Exemptions, and Temporary Accommodation for Employees Who are Not Vaccinated

- A. SCWA’s goal is to have every SCWA employee Vaccinated against COVID-19 by August 16, 2021, unless the employee is exempted from this requirement.
- B. An employee can apply under Section III for an exemption from the vaccination requirement.
- C. SCWA will temporarily accommodate employees who are not Vaccinated by

requiring the employee to participate in the SARS-CoV-2 Testing Program until the employee is Vaccinated or SCWA cancels the temporary accommodation.

### III. Exemptions from Mandatory Vaccine Requirement

#### A. Exemption for Medical Reason

SCWA will provide an employee an exemption and reasonable accommodation if administration of a COVID-19 vaccine is contraindicated based upon the employee's documented medical condition.

To request an exemption, an employee must complete and submit the Request for Medical Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement Form to the Human Resources Department.

Exempted employees must comply with the Mandatory SARS-CoV-2 Testing Program.

#### B. Exemption for Sincerely Held Religious Belief

SCWA will provide an employee an exemption and reasonable accommodation if administration of a COVID-19 vaccine would violate the employee's Sincerely Held Religious Belief and Practice.

To request an exemption, an employee must complete and submit the Request for Sincerely Held Religious Belief and Practice Exemption from COVID -19 Vaccination Requirement Form to the Human Resources Department.

Exemption requests will be denied where the leader of the religious organization has spoken publicly in favor of the vaccine, where the documentation supporting the exemption request is readily available (e.g., from an online source), or where the objection is personal, political, or philosophical in nature.

Exempted employees must comply with the Mandatory SARS-CoV-2 Testing Program.

### IV. Temporary Accommodation for Employees Who are Not Vaccinated

Employees who are not Vaccinated must participate in the Mandatory SARS-CoV-2 Testing Program until they are Vaccinated or until the Board cancels this temporary accommodation.

If the accommodation is cancelled, the employee must be Vaccinated or the employee will be suspended without pay, and if after the suspension, the employee is not

Vaccinated, their employment will be terminated unless the employee has an approved medical reason or sincerely held religious belief exemption to receiving the vaccine.

V. Mandatory SARS-CoV-2 Testing Program

- A. Each SCWA employee who is not Vaccinated must be tested once a business week (e.g., Tuesday through Monday) for the SARS-CoV-2 virus unless their supervisor approves a different testing schedule. Each employee will be instructed on how to participate in the Testing Program. Employees must comply with the Testing Program.
- B. SCWA will designate the time, place, and manner of testing for each employee in the Program. Testing for most employees will occur at a SCWA facility during the employee's normal work hours. Some employees (e.g., Control Center Operator) may be scheduled to obtain a test during their nonwork hours. SCWA will utilize a new self-administered nasal PCR test being developed by Northwell at SCWA office testing sites when the new test becomes available for SCWA use, provided the net testing costs are comparable to the testing costs under Phases X, XI and XII. SCWA may also utilize or authorize the use of other self-administered tests.
- C. If an employee misses their designated testing appointment, the employee's supervisor will reschedule the employee's test at either a SCWA facility or a health care provider approved by SCWA. If the supervisor is unable to reschedule the employee's test during the employee's normal working hours, the employee will be granted one hour to obtain a test from the provider designated by SCWA. The employee's supervisor will designate the time and location for the test.
- D. All Mandatory Testing Program tests must be performed at a SCWA facility or by a SCWA designated provider. An employee may not opt out of testing at a SCWA facility or having a test performed by a SCWA designated provider.
- E. Participation in the Testing Program is a condition of employment. Each employee who is not Vaccinated, must provide proof of their weekly test result to SCWA unless otherwise excused by their supervisor.
- F. An employee who is not Vaccinated and who does not comply with the Mandatory Testing Program will be suspended without pay.
- G. Each SCWA employee that is not Vaccinated must complete a daily COVID-19 symptom and temperature check.

VI. Cancellation of the Testing Accommodation

The SCWA Board expects that all SCWA employees will be Vaccinated. SCWA will

review the New York State and Suffolk County COVID-19 positivity rate, SCWA's vaccination rate, and the impact the implementation of COVID-19 Policy Phase XIII has on SCWA operations to determine whether to cancel the testing accommodation for those employees who are not Vaccinated.

If the accommodation is cancelled, each SCWA employee without an approved exemption must be Vaccinated or the employee will be suspended without pay. If after the suspension the employee still has not been Vaccinated, their employment will be terminated unless the employee has an approved exemption to receiving the vaccine.

VII. Implementation, Corrective Action, and Non-Retaliation

A. Implementation Date

This Policy goes into effect upon its issuance.

B. Corrective Action

Unless as otherwise provided herein, SCWA will enforce the COVID-19 protocols through disciplinary action in accordance with SCWA Policy 406.

C. Non-Retaliation

SCWA prohibits any form of discipline, intimidation, or retaliation for reporting a violation of this Phase or any other health or safety concern. Employees have the right to report work-related injuries and illness, and SCWA will not discharge, discriminate, or other retaliate against employees for reporting work-related injuries or good faith health and safety concerns.

VIII. Phase XIII Duration

The CEO, in consultation with the Board, Senior Leadership Team and Office of Emergency Management, will determine the duration of the Phase XIII protocols. The CEO is authorized to modify or terminate any of the COVID-19 Response Plan protocols issued under any Phase, or issue new Phases, as conditions require without action of the Board.