State of South Dakota
Mandatory Influenza Vaccination Policy
Questions and Answers

1. **Who is required to get a flu vaccination?**

   - All state-employed personnel in state institutions including the Human Services Center in Yankton, the South Dakota Developmental Center in Redfield, the South Dakota Veterans Home in Hot Springs, and staff of the State Public Health Laboratory in Pierre;
   - All state-employed personnel providing direct health care services to a prisoner; client or patient in a correctional, clinic, office, home, or other setting; or any state-employed personnel whose routine work duties brings them into direct contact with a client or patient in a patient or client care area; and
   - All state-employed personnel entering a licensed healthcare facility on a routine basis as part of their job responsibilities.
   - All state-employed personnel identified by their employer as meeting the close/direct contact.
   - Each state agency shall ensure that all contract staff, vendors, students, supervising faculty, or volunteers providing services in any setting described above, provide documentation to the state agency that they are vaccinated against influenza or meet one of the exemptions.

2. **Is proof of a flu vaccination required?**

   Yes, employees who are required to get a flu vaccination must provide proof annually by December 1.

3. **If I'm required to get a flu vaccine, how do I submit proof of flu vaccination?**

   Employees receiving the flu vaccination through a state sponsored flu vaccination clinic will be able to access their vaccination completion through the Primary Health Platform, to submit to their supervisor as proof.

   Employees who ***do not*** go to the state sponsored flu vaccination clinics need to return proof of vaccination to their supervisor annually by December 1.

   Proof of flu vaccination may include a note or receipt from your medical provider, Explanation of Benefits from your health insurance company, a document from the South Dakota Immunization Information System (SDIIS), or a receipt from a pharmacy. Proof must be clearly labeled as a flu vaccination and include your name and vaccination date.

4. **Where can I receive my flu vaccination?**

   Employees covered by the South Dakota State Employee Health Plan are encouraged to attend a free, state sponsored flu vaccination clinics.

5. **When will the state sponsored flu vaccination clinics be available?**

   Most of the flu clinics will start after October 1st. The state sponsored flu vaccination schedule is available at: https://www.sd.gov/bhra?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0044563&sys_kb_id=f26c8689475b0350c9191233e16d43fa&spa=1

6. **Will the state pay for my flu vaccination?**
   Employees, spouses, and dependents covered by the South Dakota State Employee Health Plan can get a covered flu vaccination at state-sponsored clinics. Employees who Opt-Out of the State Employee Health Plan will be responsible for the cost of their flu vaccination.

7. **Can I get a flu shot from another source other than a state sponsored flu vaccination clinic?**
   Yes, but it is your responsibility to find out if the flu vaccination is covered by the South Dakota State Employee Health Plan and provide proof of vaccination.

8. **What if I have an exemption or refuse the flu vaccination?**
   Employees who have an exemption from getting the flu vaccination will be required to wear a surgical mask when the South Dakota Department of Health (DOH) begins reporting influenza activity has reached the "local, regional or widespread" level and through the remainder of the flu season. Employees who do not have a qualifying exemption and refuse to obtain a flu vaccination will be placed on furlough, and may be subject to further disciplinary action, until the flu season ends, the employee chooses to obtain a flu vaccination, or presents a completed exemption form.

9. **Who will pay for the surgical masks?**

   Agencies will provide surgical masks for employees who refuse the flu vaccination.

10. **Will I be required to wear a surgical mask at all times while at work?**
    Agencies will determine when employees must wear a surgical mask. The standard guideline is within 6 feet of another person.

11. **Are there qualified exemptions for flu vaccination?**
    Yes, employees will be granted exemptions based on certain medical contraindications or adherence to a religious doctrine whose teachings are opposed to immunization. Employees granted exemptions are required to wear a surgical mask when the DOH begins reporting influenza activity has reached the "local, regional or widespread" level and through the remainder of the flu season.

12. **How will I know when the flu season ends, and I no longer need to wear a surgical mask?**
    The Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) will notify agencies when the influenza activity reaches the "sporadic" level, thus ending the flu season. When the flu season ends, employees should visit with supervisor about mask discontinuation. Employees may access the weekly influenza activity report on the DOH website at:
    https://doh.sd.gov/health-data-reports/data-dashboards/influenza-dashboard/influenza-vaccination-dashboard/

13. **What is the deadline for requesting a qualified exemption for flu vaccination?**

Those requesting an exemption to the flu vaccination requirement must submit the request annually by October 15 to his/her direct supervisor on forms provided by BHR. The form is available at:

https://www.sd.gov/bhra?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0044660&sys_kb_id=e03a4a7997887a1042f3b546f053af27&spa=1

Supervisors will send the completed exemption/refusal form to BHR for retention in the employee's personnel file.

15. **If I have an exemption and refuse to wear a surgical mask?**

    Employees who have a qualifying exemption but refuse to wear a surgical mask will be placed on furlough and may be subject to further disciplinary action.

16. **Will employees hired during flu season be required to get a flu vaccination?**

    Newly hired employees covered by the Mandatory Influenza Vaccination Policy will be required to get a flu vaccination, provide proof of a previous flu vaccination in the current calendar year, or wear a mask.

17. **Will contract staff, vendors, students, supervising faculty, or volunteers providing services be required to get a flu vaccination?**

    Contract staff, vendors, students, supervising faculty, or volunteers providing services who frequently visit the facilities covered in the executive order and the Mandatory Influenza Vaccination Policy during flu season are required to get a flu vaccination or wear a surgical mask. Agencies will determine who should receive the proof of vaccination and the location of the surgical masks.

18. **Will the state pay for outside personnel such as vendors and contractors flu shots?**

    No. The cost of the flu vaccination is the responsibility of outside personnel.

19. **Will visitors be required to wear a surgical mask?**

    Visitors are not covered by the executive order of the Mandatory Influenza Vaccination Policy. However, an agency may institute measures to limit exposure to, or spread of, the flu within a facility if necessary.

20. **What if a person becomes sick with influenza-like illness (fever, sore throat, cough).**

    The sick person should stay home until 24 hours after fever has subsided.