

Considerations before setting up an on-site COVID vaccination clinic



The Centers for Disease Control, while not directly encouraging employers to set up vaccination clinics, has some advice for those wanting to. With the increased availability of vaccines in the coming weeks, this may be an attractive option for your company. This is especially true if your work environment makes it challenging for employees to take off to go to vaccine appointments.

After all, mass employee vaccination is a must for getting business "back to normal." While this may not be a viable option for many employers, it could be an effective way to get employees vaccinated for some.

Here are some things to consider if you're serious about providing on-site vaccinations for your employees.

Are you a good candidate for an on-site vaccination clinic?

Let's face it, making shots easy for employees to receive is the key to their participation. Having an on-site clinic eliminates this barrier (or excuse, in some cases).

According to the CDC, you're ahead of the game if you already have an on-site medical clinic. If you don't, you may still be a good candidate if you:

- Have a large number of employees who work predictable schedules.

- Can enroll in your jurisdiction's immunization program as a vaccination provider (including appropriately training staff or hiring a vaccination provider).
- Have the physical space to accommodate a temporary clinic.

Steps to take before the needle

Don't go this alone. The CDC recommends you get input from management, human resources, and employees. You can also contact your local health department for help and guidance.

Encourage the C-suite and high-level managers to become vaccine role models by inviting them to share their personal reasons for getting vaccinated and reminding everyone why it's important to get the shot.

Transparent communication with all workers about vaccination is key, the CDC says. While you shouldn't make medical recommendations, you should have a communication plan that points employees to appropriate resources like the following.

- [Key things to know about COVID-19 vaccines.](#)
- [Frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccination.](#)
- [Myths and facts about the COVID-19 vaccine.](#)

Any communications plan must address employees' concerns and questions. Additionally, it's important to include key logistical information and answers to any questions specific to your business.

You can try to make this fun (or at least, less not-fun), by sharing key messages with employees through posters, emails, and other channels. Emphasize the benefits of protecting themselves, their families, co-workers, and community. Hand out "I got the shot" stickers to employees.

OK, shot time

Establish when shots will be given, ideally during regular office hours, and the order of vaccinations. You may choose to order them by department, alphabetical order, or by employees' preexisting conditions, for example. But someone is always going to be last and you should be upfront about that. Being last isn't the end of the world.

The CDC recommends you provide shots to everyone in the workplace, even temps and independent contractors. And remember the Affordable Care Act, shots must be offered for free.

One key after-shot consideration: You must be prepared to monitor for and manage potential severe adverse reactions after employees are vaccinated.

Consider staggering employee vaccination dates to avoid staff shortages due to vaccine side effects. We hear side effects are worse for women and after the second shot, in general.

Best practices

Regardless of whether you'll be providing shots at your workplace, the CDC has some best practices for you:

- Offer flexible, nonpunitive sick leave options (e.g., paid sick leave) for employees who have side-effect symptoms after vaccination.
- Allow time for vaccine confidence to grow. Workers who are hesitant may become more confident after seeing co-workers get vaccinated. If you set up an onsite clinic, offer employees more than one chance to be vaccinated. Perhaps mobile clinics can come back a couple of times.
- Ask organizations and individuals whom employees respect to come in for a chat to help you build

confidence for covid shots.