

Health Employment Directive No. 01/16

Effective Date:
1 July 2016

Supersedes:
n/a

Vaccine preventable diseases (VPD) requirements

1. Compliance

Compliance with this Health Employment Directive (HED) is mandatory.

2. Purpose

To outline requirements for existing employees and applicants for employment regarding vaccination against vaccine preventable diseases.

3. Legislative Provision

Section 51A of the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*

4. Application

This HED applies to all health service employees engaged and applicants to be engaged under the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* (the Act) in Hospital and Health Services and the Department of Health.

5. Related documents

- Health Service Directive: Vaccine Preventable Disease Screening for Contractors, Students and Volunteers (QH-HSD-047:2016)
- Protocol: Vaccine Preventable Disease Screening for Contractors Students and Volunteers (QH-HSD-047-1:2016)
- Queensland Health Vaccine preventable diseases evidence requirements guide
- Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1 (QH-POL-212)
- The Australian Immunisation Handbook

Directive:

6. Vaccine preventable diseases

On and from 1 July 2016 applicants seeking to be engaged for or on behalf of Queensland Health must provide documentary evidence to verify that they are either vaccinated against or that they are not susceptible to any of the VPDs listed in Table 1, prior to an offer of engagement.

Hepatitis B vaccination or proof that an individual is not susceptible to hepatitis B is a condition of employment for all Queensland Health employees (existing and new) who have direct contact with patients or who in the course of their work may be exposed to blood/body fluids or contaminated sharps.

Employees engaged prior to 1 July 2016 are not subject to the new conditions of employment unless they apply for a role with VPD requirements in another Queensland Health entity. A Queensland Health entity includes Hospital and Health Services and the Department of Health.

Table 1: VPDs for which pre-engagement vaccination evidence is required

Risk criteria	Vaccine preventable diseases
Roles that have direct contact with patients or who in the course of their work may be exposed to blood/body fluids or contaminated sharps.	Hepatitis B
Roles that have contact that would allow acquisition and/or transmission of measles, mumps, rubella, varicella or pertussis. This applies to roles in which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work requires face to face contact with patients, or normal work location is in a clinical area such as a ward, emergency department or outpatient clinic, or work frequently requires them to attend clinical areas. 	Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) Varicella (chicken pox) Pertussis (whooping cough)

In addition to the VPDs listed in Table 1, the Director-General (or delegate) or a Health Service Chief Executive, may require applicants seeking to be engaged for or on behalf of Queensland Health to provide documentary evidence to verify that they are either vaccinated against or not susceptible to the VPDs listed in Table 2. The rationale and decision to mandate applicants to provide documentary evidence that they are either vaccinated against or that they are not susceptible to these VPDs must be clearly documented.

Table 2: Additional VPDs for which pre-engagement vaccination evidence may be required

Risk criteria	Vaccine preventable diseases
Roles that involve any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work in remote Indigenous communities or with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children work in early childhood education and care work as plumbers or in regular contact with untreated sewage work caring for persons with developmental disabilities. 	Hepatitis A
Roles that may be at high risk of exposure to drug-resistant cases of tuberculosis.	Tuberculosis (TB)
Roles that are assigned to the outer Torres Strait Islands for a total of 30 days or more during the wet season.	Japanese encephalitis

6.1 Maintenance of vaccinations

Employees will be required to maintain their vaccination status as per Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Minimum required dosages for vaccines

Vaccine preventable diseases	Pre-offer of engagement	Continuing engagement
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	Minimum one dose	Second dose must be administered within three months of commencement.
Varicella (chicken pox)	Minimum one dose	Second dose (if required) must be administered within three months of commencement.
Hepatitis B	Minimum two doses	Third dose must be administered within six months of commencement.
Pertussis (whooping cough)	One dose	One dose every ten years.

Table 4: Required dosages for additional VPD's

Vaccine preventable diseases	Pre offer of engagement	Continuing engagement
Hepatitis A (where relevant)	Dosages to be determined in accordance with the recommendations in <i>The Australian Immunisation Handbook</i> as updated from time to time and in consultation with the Communicable Diseases Branch.	
Tuberculosis (where relevant)		
Japanese encephalitis (where relevant)		

6.2 Evidence and documentation

For all required VPDs, documentary evidence of vaccination and ongoing vaccination must be submitted to the line manager and/or delegate in a timely manner as a condition of continued engagement. The documentary evidence must be in an acceptable form determined by the employer. Guidance on acceptable forms of evidence is provided in the Vaccine preventable diseases evidence requirements guide.

Where a role requires vaccinations, all vaccinations required must be documented in the:

- letter of offer
- contract of employment
- position role description
- any other relevant engagement documentation.

6.3 Exceptional Circumstances

There are some circumstances when the most meritorious candidate for a position cannot be safely vaccinated in order to satisfy the VPD requirements for their position due to:

- a medical condition
- pregnancy
- shortage of vaccinations.

In these circumstances, a risk assessment must be completed by local experts (e.g. Infectious Diseases Physician, Infection Control Unit, Workplace Health and Safety) to determine the level of risk of the employee contracting/transmitting VPDs in their role. In the event that there is a medium/high risk, the employee should be temporarily deployed to a position of lower risk.

If the worker is temporarily deployed to another role, they should be transferred into the initial role once they are able to satisfy the vaccination requirements of the role they were appointed to.

When offering a position to an applicant in this circumstance, the relevant engagement documentation must clearly state that ongoing engagement is subject to the person satisfying the VPD requirement. A HHS's ability to accommodate an employee in this manner would be subject to the availability of alternative roles.

In circumstances where the delay in the commencement of an employee would directly impact on clinical care and/or services the Director-General (or delegate) or a Health Service Chief Executive may temporarily exempt a position from the VPD requirements. The letter of engagement for the employee must specify the period of exemption, and require the employee to provide documentary evidence to verify that they are either vaccinated against or not susceptible to the relevant VPDs prior to the end of the exemption period as a condition for ongoing employment. All exemptions must be reported to the Director-General in the VPD exemption report template.

7. Definitions

Act	<i>Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011</i>
Queensland Health Entity	The Department of Health or a Hospital and Health Service
Department of Health (the Department)	The Department of Health includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clinical Excellence Division• Corporate Services Division• Healthcare Purchasing and System Performance Division• Strategy, Policy and Planning Division• Chief Health Officer and Prevention Division• Office of the Director-General• Health Support Queensland• eHealth Queensland• any successor agency of those listed above however so named.
Hospital and Health Service (HHS)	A statutory body established under the <i>Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011</i> responsible for the provision of public sector health services for a geographical area, which includes one or more health facilities.

8. History

HED No. 01/16 July 2016	Issued under section 51A of the <i>Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011</i> as a condition of employment for health service employees.
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9. Approval and implementation

Directive custodian

Chief Human Resources Officer

Approval by Chief Executive

Russell Bowles
A/Director-General

Approval date:

30 June 2016