



Superior Court of California County of Sonoma

Bradford J. DeMeo
Presiding Judge

ACCESS, SERVICE, JUSTICE

Arlene D. Junior
Court Executive Officer

PRESS RELEASE

August 23, 2021

SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA: ALL SONOMA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT EMPLOYEES WILL BE REQUIRED TO GET VACCINATED UNDER NEW MANDATORY POLICY

For Immediate Release

Sonoma County Superior Court will require all employees to get vaccinated as a condition of employment no later than 45 days after today's Food & Drug Administration final approval of the Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine, says Presiding Judge Bradford DeMeo and Executive Officer Arlene D. Junior. Ms. Junior also announced that implementation of this requirement is subject to notice and meeting obligations with the exclusive representatives of the Court's employees.

"Courts must protect the people we serve," Presiding Judge DeMeo said. "By ensuring a safe work environment, through mandatory vaccination, the Court is protecting both its employees who provide essential public services and those who are required to come into a courthouse. Throughout the pandemic, the Court has strictly followed public health and CDC guidelines to protect our workforce, justice partners, and the public from COVID-19."

Ms. Junior says, "Under the California Government Code, the Court's employees are considered disaster service workers and are required to deliver statutorily mandated, time-sensitive and emergency services in times of local, state and national emergencies such as this global pandemic. In addition, people who enter our courthouses are required, and many times ordered, to come to Court, so the Court must do everything possible to protect our workforce and the public we serve."

The court's new policy includes the following:

- Employees with a medical condition that prevents them from getting a vaccine, as verified by their medical provider, or those with a confirmed sincerely held religious belief that prohibits them from receiving a vaccine, may request to be excused from this vaccination requirement as a reasonable accommodation.
- The Court will review requests for accommodation on a case-by-case basis consistent with its existing procedures for reasonable accommodation requests.
- Employees will be required to submit their vaccine verification through a portal. The information will be kept confidential.

Although judicial officers are independently elected officials and, thus, not subject to "employee" policies and procedures, all of Sonoma County's judges and commissioners, including retired judges on assignment, are fully vaccinated.

"The Vaccine is the primary tool we have to keep everyone safe and end this pandemic," Presiding Judge DeMeo said. "Earlier this year, the Court worked with county health department officials to prioritize vaccinations for court staff and judicial officers. Our justice partners were also prioritized. The Court is now proud to join healthcare companies, higher education, businesses, and government to do its part to promote public health and safety."



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Media Contact:

Arlene D. Junior

Superior Court of California, COUNTY OF SONOMA

600 Administration Drive

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Phone: 707-521-6855

For additional information, visit website at <http://sonoma.courts.ca.gov/>

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