

Agency of Commerce & Department of Health Webinar Series

February 17, 2021



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Vermont Department of Health

OVERVIEW AND UPDATE OF STATE'S VACCINATION POLICY

COVID-19 Vaccination Update

February 16, 2021

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGY

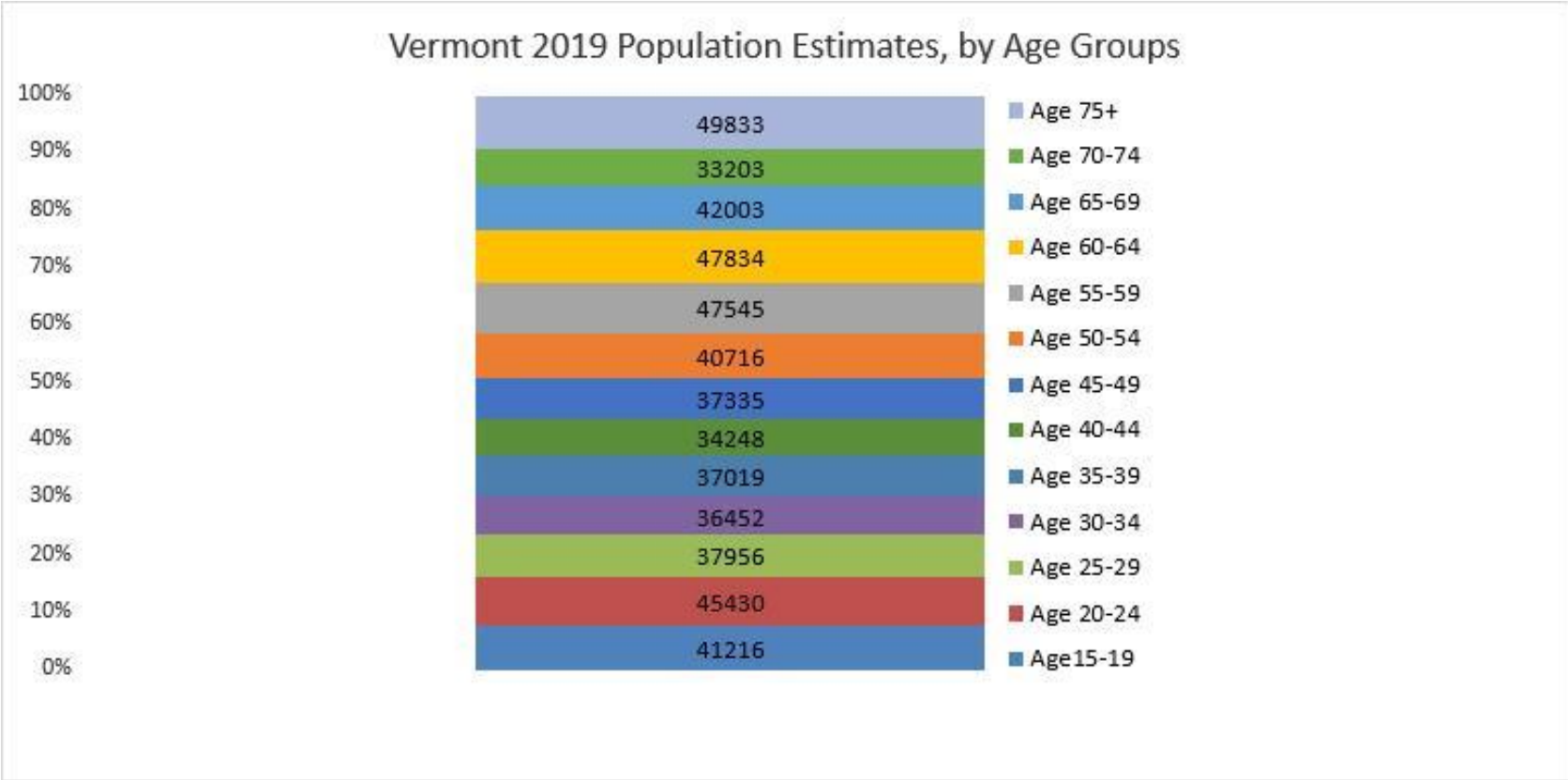
“Age Banding”

- Vermont has worked hard to take a data-driven approach in our vaccination delivery strategy.
- Our primary strategy with vaccinations is to prevent deaths among Vermonters and we are honing our strategy to prioritize saving lives, and ensure the next phases are easy to implement, communicate, and understand.
- **Based on data and our goal to prevent deaths – Vermont is taking an approach in delivery that is based on age group and chronic conditions at this time.**

COVID-19 Vaccination Update

January 13, 2021

Demographics by Age-bands



COVID-19 Vaccination Update

February 16, 2021

VACCINE DISTRIBUTION UPDATE

- Vermont is receiving around 10,800 vaccine doses weekly for the whole state.
- As of 2/16: over 78,000 Vermonters have been vaccinated (40,754 have received first dose and 37,452 have received both doses)
- As of 2/16: Approximately 14% of Vermont residents age 16 and over have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Vermonters who are **70+** can sign up for a vaccine appointment here:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/about-covid-19-vaccines-vermont>



COVID-19 Prevention for Manufacturing Businesses

COVID-19 Response – Primary Prevention Team

Vermont Department of Health

February 17, 2021

Primary Prevention Team's Role and Responsibilities

- The Vermont Department of Health's Primary Prevention Team:
- Works with groups, facilities, agencies, and other entities to help them prepare prior to cases being identified.
- Creates guidance documents, presentations, and reference materials for specific populations.
- Answers questions about COVID-19 prevention.
- Reviews and provides feedback on documents, plans, and protocols.

Resources for Information and Support

- CDC Guidance for Manufacturing Workers and Employers

- Includes:

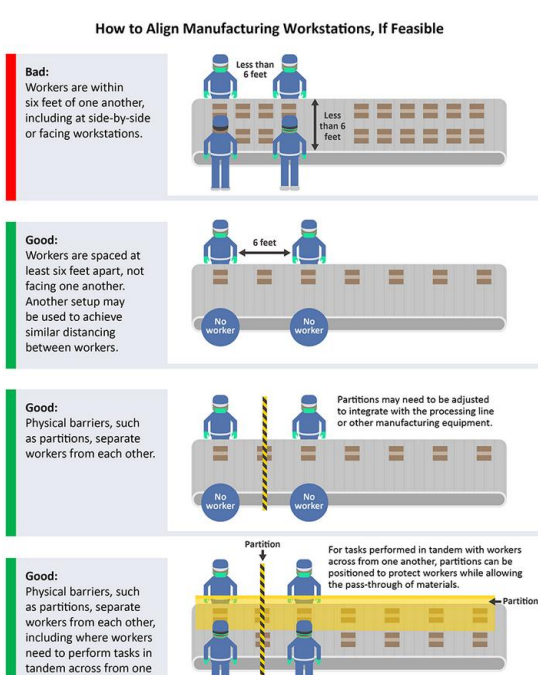
- Key Strategies
- Tips for Employees and Communication Plans
- Diagrams, Posters and other Resources
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-manufacturing-workers-employers.html>

- Continuity of Operations Guidance for Critical Infrastructure Workers

- <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/COVID-19-Critical-Infrastructure-Continuity-Operations-Guidance.pdf>

- Primary Prevention

- Can provide individualized support for implementing prevention plans



Key Strategies to Prevent COVID-19 Infection among Employees

- Implement assessment and control plans, emergency operation plans and educate employees on all protocols



- Cover topics like staying home when sick, physical distancing, how to wear face coverings and proper hand hygiene
- Provide materials in multiple formats and languages if necessary
- Prepare for increased absences
- Plan how to continue essential business functions with a reduced workforce
- Cross-train workers to perform critical duties
- Prepare for how to respond if there is a positive case on site
- <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/COVID-19-in-the-Workplace-Checklist-for-Employers.pdf>

Key Strategies to Prevent COVID-19 Infection among Employees



Physical Distancing

Keep employees at least 6 feet away from each other as much as possible

- Use physical barriers, reduce staffing or modify workstations procedures or hours and shifts
- Add additional clock in/out stations, space out chairs in break rooms, add outside tents for breaks
- Try to keep employees in cohorts so they don't mix with other cohorts
- Stagger break times and shifts.
- Place reminders where employees might gather, including work areas, break areas, locker rooms, halls or corridors, and entrance and exit areas.
- Encourage employees to avoid carpooling to and from work, if possible.

Key Strategies to Prevent COVID-19 Infection among Employees



- Promote proper hand hygiene

- Provide access to running water, soap, paper towels and trash cans
- Use no-touch trash cans, soap dispensers, hand sanitizer dispensers etc. if possible
- Have employees wash hands for at least 20 seconds
- Increase the number of hand sanitizer stations
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

Key Strategies to Prevent COVID-19 Infection among Employees

- Screen employees for potential COVID-19 symptoms before they enter the workplace



- Ensure that employees know the symptoms of COVID-19 and encourage them to contact supervisors immediately upon developing any symptoms
- Develop a standardized process for screening employees prior to entering the facility
- Support sick leave and other programs to encourage sick employees to stay home

- Send employees with symptoms home immediately, encourage them to self-isolate and provide information on when they can return to work
- Consult with the Outbreak Response Team at the Health Department if there are critical staff shortages
- FAQs on Work and Employees - <https://apps.health.vermont.gov/COVID/faq/#work-and-employees>

Key Strategies to Prevent COVID-19 Infection among Employees



Cleaning and Disinfection

Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection in shared spaces

- Clean and disinfect tools or other equipment at least as often as employees change workstations.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces in workspaces and break rooms at the end of each shift.
- Have approved cleaning and disinfecting products readily available and encourage employees to disinfect their own workstations
- Create lists of high-touch surfaces and develop schedules for when to clean them
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19>

Key Strategies to Prevent COVID-19 Infection among Employees

- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), face coverings and face shields

- Make sure face coverings are worn properly (snugly over the face and mouth)
- Provide washable coverings with multiple layers of fabric or disposable face masks
- Replace when wet, dirty or contaminated
- Try to have designated face shields for each employee and clean after each shift.
- Make sure face shields extend past the chin and wrap around the sides of the face



- Do not substitute face coverings for recommended or required PPE such as respirators or medical facemasks
- Ensure PPE is used correctly
- If n95 respirators with exhalation valves are used, they must be covered by an additional facemask
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>



AHS.VDHCovid19PreventionResponse@vermont.gov

healthvermont.gov/covid-19

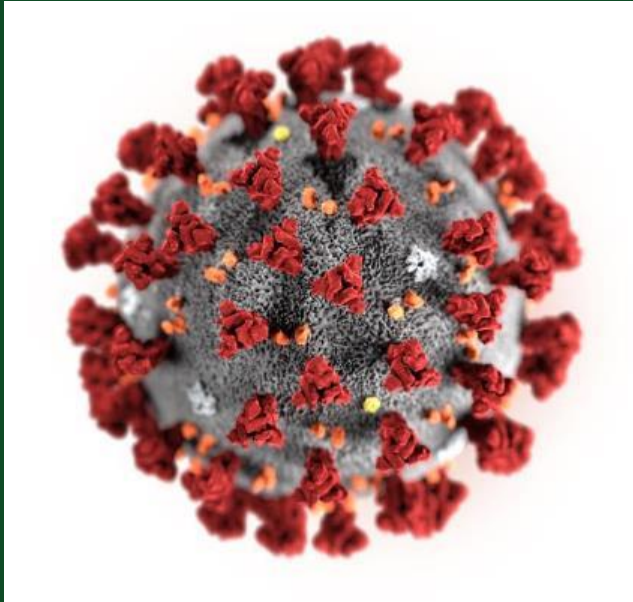


Illustration: CDC / Alissa Eckert & Dan Higgins

Protecting the Safety and Health of Workers

Coronavirus Disease 2021 (COVID-19)

The New Federal OSHA Guidance

<https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework>

New OSHA Guidance Issued January 29, 2021

- Federal OSHA issued revised guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace.
- Many of the recommendations provided in the revised guidance should be familiar to Vermont employers, but some provisions are updated, or address issues like vaccination, preventing retaliation, and lessening the impact of quarantine or isolation.
- It is recommended that the guidance be reviewed in its entirety <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework>
- **NOTE:** the provisions are Guidance at this stage, but it is quite likely that federal OSHA will issue an Emergency Temporary Standard in March and it will be enforceable.

The Basics Remain the same

- 1. Educate your employees about the virus
What it is, How it is transmitted, Prevention
- 2. Employers should implement COVID-19 Prevention Programs in the workplace, including:
 - conduct a hazard assessment;
 - identify a combination of measures that limit the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace;
 - adopt measures to ensure that workers who are infected or potentially infected are separated and sent home from the workplace;
 - improving ventilation;

The Basics remain the same (continued)

- - implement physical distancing;
 - install barriers where physical distancing cannot be maintained;
 - Masking - suppress the spread by using face coverings;
 - provide supplies for good hygiene;
 - perform routine cleaning and disinfection; and,
 - provide and use personal protective equipment (PPE), when necessary.
- Record and report COVID-19 infections and deaths

What is New?

- Face coverings should have at least two layers and should not feature exhalation valves or vents.
In operations where face coverings can become wet or soiled, employers should provide workers with replacements daily or more frequently.
- Existing guidance requires that employees who come in close contact with a COVID positive person quarantine. The new guidance extends the quarantine requirement to require it for workers who:
 - had direct physical contact with a person who has COVID-19 (hugged or kissed them);
 - shared eating or drinking utensils with them; and
 - if someone who has COVID-19 sneezed, coughed or somehow got respiratory droplets on them.

- Provide protections for workers at higher risk for severe illness through supportive policies and practices
- implement protections from retaliation for workers who raise COVID-19 related concerns.
- When performing the hazard Assessment, include affected workers in the assessment.
- Educate, Train and Communicate with workers in a format and language they can easily understand.
- Educate workers about the COVID vaccine and Make a COVID-19 vaccine or vaccination series available at no cost , BUT do not distinguish between workers who are vaccinated and those who are not. (Continue masking, physical distancing etc. even if workers are vaccinated).
- Minimize the effect of employee quarantines and isolations by implementing non-punitive policies and provide paid sick leave.

Existing OSHA Standards Protect Workers from Exposure

- Follow existing OSHA standards to help protect workers from exposure to SARS-CoV-2 and infection with COVID-19.
- Employers should also remember that OSHA can use the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1), of the Occupational Safety and Health Act to ensure that workers are protected from recognized safety and health hazards that may cause serious harm.
- IF federal OSHA adopts an emergency temporary standard, Vermont will be required to adopt one at least as effective as the federal standard and enforce it.

Relevant OSHA Requirements

- Personal Protective Equipment (29 CFR 1910 subpart I), including:
 - PPE General Requirements (1910.132)
 - Eye and Face Protection (1910.133)
 - Respiratory Protection (1910.134)
 - Hand Protection (29 CFR 1910.138)
- Bloodborne Pathogens (29 CFR 1910.1030)
- Hazard Communication (29 CFR 1910.1200)
- Recordkeeping (29 CFR part 1904)

FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RELIEF ACT

FFCRA Paid Sick Leave required covered employers to provide 80 hours of paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons, plus an additional 10 weeks of paid family and medical leave at 2/3 pay for employees needing to care for a child due to a school or child care provider closure.

These requirements expired on December 31, 2020.

- The Consolidated Appropriations Act (2021), **did not extend the requirement that employers make paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave available to employees.**
- However, it did extend the tax credit available to employers for payments made to employees as paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave through March 31, 2021.

Thus, **employers may voluntarily elect to provide paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave to employees and will receive tax credits for doing so through March 31, 2021.** There is no legal requirement that they do so.

Any paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave taken by employees up to December 31, 2020 must still be paid by employers despite the expiration of the FFCRA.