

# Take The COVID-19 Vaccine Or Lose Your Job: Things Employees Should Know



In December of 2020, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) concluded that employers have a right to mandate employees get the COVID-19 vaccine for face being fired.

If you're someone that's looking for gainful employment or gearing up to return to the workplace, you're likely curious about what all this means.

Will you lose your job or be able to find available positions on the market if you don't want the vaccine? Although it's natural to be concerned, getting all the facts can put your mind at ease.

## **Can Your Employers Enforce COVID-19 Vaccines?**

Isn't America the land of the free? As a citizen, you should have a right to choose what you want in your body, right? So, is it really possible for employers to mandate COVID-19 vaccines? The reality is yes. Employers are responsible for providing a safe and decent environment for their employees. If they believe that getting staff to take a vaccine will enhance safety and reduce risks, they are within their right to make this a requirement. You can find comfort in knowing that there are some exemptions.

## **Religious Practices And Disabilities**

Do you practice a religion that prohibits vaccinations? Perhaps you have a medical condition or disability that prevents your ability to get the vaccine safely? If so, you are protected by laws like the American

Disabilities Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII). Your employer would have to prove that not getting your vaccine would cause unnecessary harm to the rest of the staff. They would also have to prove that they do not have any reasonable accommodations to offer for you to maintain your position. If they overlook these steps, you could have grounds for a lawsuit.

If you fall into these protected categories, you must speak up right away. You should let your employer know what your concerns are so you can discuss the next best steps. Suppose you're applying for positions with a company with COVID-19 vaccine mandates. In that case, it's best to bring up your religious beliefs or disabilities before taking an interview or before your information is submitted for an employment background check.

### **Reasonable Accommodations**

Some employers prefer to encourage COVID-19 vaccines but do not develop a mandate. As rules and regulations are relatively new, many employers don't want to risk getting into financial or legal trouble. Those who have taken this route prefer to incentivize or offer reasonable accommodations to employees interested in taking the vaccine but face challenges.

For example, if you're an hourly employee, taking time off from work to get vaccinated could pose a financial hardship for you and your family. Your employer may be willing to compensate you for the paid time off so that this isn't an issue. I

f you presently walk or take public transportation to work, getting to and from a COVID-19 vaccine site may be challenging. Some employers offer discounts or credits on rideshare services or reimbursement for gas mileage to help soften the blow.

### **What If You're Strongly Against Vaccines?**

So, what happens if you simply don't want a vaccine? Your religion may not prevent it, and you may not have any disabilities, but you still aren't sure you want to get vaccinated. The best thing you can do is express your concerns to your employer. If your hesitation is due to a lack of information, they may be able to provide you with content or refer you to human resources, legal, or medical experts to give you more facts.

If there are other reasons you don't want the vaccine (like maybe you'd prefer to allow more time to pass and more studies to be done), your employer may be able to assist you. They could enable you to work from home a while longer or work in a department that isn't categorized as high-risk.

Don't assume that not getting the coronavirus vaccine will leave you jobless and broke at the end of the day. Believe it or not, most employers are holding off on their right to issue mandates and have instead decided to educate, communicate, and incentivize to encourage employees to take the vaccine.

You have rights and protections, so be sure to get all the facts before jumping to any conclusions or giving your employer notice.

