



Immunisation

1. Overview

1.1 At a glance

At Sydney Water the safety, health and wellbeing of our employees is our top priority. We are committed to providing a workplace that is as safe as possible for all our people, and to creating a better life by delivering uninterrupted, world-class water services to Greater Sydney and the Illawarra.

To ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of our people, Sydney Water may at times require immunisation against Vaccine Preventable Diseases. If vaccination is required, it will be done in consultation with employees, and informed by risk assessment and medical advice.

This policy outlines the Sydney Water's position on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the potential for immunisation requirements for employees, contractors, and visitors at Sydney Water.

1.2 Scope

- This policy applies to all Sydney Water employees, contractors, and visitors.
- This policy applies to all Sydney Water sites.
- This policy does not apply to Emergency Service responders for example Police, NSW Fire & Rescue and NSW Ambulance Service or government regulators such as Safe Work NSW or an Environmental Protection Authority Inspector that may need to access Sydney Water sites.

1.3 Objective

- To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, contractors, visitors, customers, and the wider community by minimising the transmission and severity of Vaccine Preventable Diseases through immunisation
- To protect our purpose of continuing to provide essential water services to Greater Sydney and the Illawarra.

2. Policy in detail

This policy relates to vaccinations that may be required or recommended as a condition of employment, site access, or due to a risk of exposure to infection. Risk of exposure may include exposure to human biofluids (such as wastewater), exposure to biological waste, uncontrolled exposure to members of the public, and/or exposure to trade waste.

Diseases that can be prevented or minimised by vaccination include (but are not limited to) Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Tetanus, Influenza, and COVID-19. For further information refer to the [Immunisation Guidelines](#).

Key critical points:

- Sydney Water will ensure that employees and contractors who may come into contact with known infectious disease through water or wastewater or other sources as part of the inherent requirements of their role will be made aware of these risks. Where a Vaccine Preventable Disease exists, Sydney Water strongly encourages immunisation against that disease in line with the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#), and will either provide or reimburse the cost of vaccines (including boosters) for impacted employees.
- Sydney Water will risk assess any novel or emerging infectious disease in line with Sydney Water's [Infectious Diseases Management Plan](#). Determinations on reasonable controls including vaccination will be made following Sydney Water's risk assessment process, consultation process, and from advice or legislative requirements from governmental authorities such as NSW Health.
- Sydney Water's current position on vaccine preventable diseases is stated in Appendix 1 of this policy. Where vaccination is required, Sydney Water may request proof of vaccination status.
- For categories of prospective workers whose role could allow acquisition and/or transmission of Vaccine Preventable Diseases, proof of vaccination or evidence that an individual is not susceptible to specific Vaccine Preventable Diseases may be imposed as a condition of employment/engagement or site access. This proof can be obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register, or for older records from a General Practitioner.
- Existing and prospective workers may be required to provide proof of vaccination or evidence that they are not susceptible to infection. This may include but is not limited to those who:
 - have direct contact with human biofluids (such as wastewater).
 - in the course of their work may be exposed to blood/body fluids or contaminated sharps.
 - have uncontrolled exposure to members of the public.

- during the course of their work are required to access locations that require vaccination (e.g. aged care facilities, or sites that have specific vaccinations required as a condition of entry).
 - it is required by law or recommended by governmental health departments and/or medical advice that they are vaccinated.
- Sydney Water must ensure the health and safety of its employees. Employees must also ensure their own safety and co-operate and comply with Sydney Water's policies including in the area of vaccination.
- Where an employee is unable or unwilling to be vaccinated where vaccination is required as set out above or it has been mandated or recommended by NSW or Federal government or medical advice, Sydney Water will meet with the employee to determine if other suitable duties are available before considering any other action. If an employee is unable to be vaccinated, Sydney Water's independent medical advisory service may be engaged for further advice.
- Vaccination requirements can be amended and updated by Sydney Water at any time, subject to risk assessment and consultation with employees.
- Sydney Water will continue to monitor and assess the risk of infectious diseases (including emerging diseases) in line with Sydney Water's [Infectious Disease Management Plan](#), and will review immunisation requirements in line with risk management and consultation processes.
- Where vaccination is not provided by government health services, Sydney Water will reimburse costs of vaccines if they are deemed to be critical to the nature of the work being conducted and are aligned to government health recommendations.
- Workers may be asked to provide evidence of their immunisation history. Health information will only be collected in limited circumstances of needing to ensure compliance with this policy. This information will be stored securely, only accessible to line management and relevant People and Culture personnel, and can be accessed by the employee to ensure its accuracy.
- The information in this policy is not designed to substitute individualised medical advice. Prospective employees, contractors, and visitors should consult with their own healthcare providers as to any additional vaccinations or booster vaccinations that may be recommended due to their personal circumstances which may include, but not be limited to, pregnancy, planned pregnancy, increased vulnerability to specific infections, or immunocompromising medical conditions. People within the scope of this policy should consider the impact that disease transmission may have on others they come into contact with.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition	Source
Approved vaccine	Approved vaccine means any vaccination that has been approved for use in Australia by the TGA.	Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)
Sydney Water site	<p>Sydney Water sites, in this context, include any location where Sydney Water staff are required to perform their work but do not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any Sydney Water asset or land where a contractor is engaged as a principal contractor for work health and safety purposes (and controls access and egress to and from the asset/land); or any land containing a Sydney Water asset where another entity has only granted Sydney Water access rights to inspect/maintain the asset; or any location where a contractor is engaged to deliver a service without engaging or interacting with Sydney Water staff. 	Accessing Sydney Water Properties – Security Policy
Vaccine Preventable Disease	A Vaccine Preventable Disease is a disease that can be prevented, or its impact reduced, through immunisation.	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare - Australian Government
Worker	<p>A worker is a person who carries out work in any capacity for a business or employer or ‘person conducting a business undertaking’ They can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an employee a trainee, apprentice or work experience student a volunteer an outworker a contractor or sub-contractor an employee of a contractor or sub-contractor an employee of a labour hire company 	Safework NSW

4. Context

4.1 Accountabilities

Position	Accountabilities
Managing Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorse this policy
General Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure this policy is implemented in their area of responsibility
Manager Safety Capability & Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure this policy is reviewed and updated
Sydney Water employees and contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of and adhere to this policy

4.2 Training and competencies

Position	Training or competency
All employees and contractors	Made aware of this policy through distribution
All visitors	Made aware of this policy through site signage, induction and/or notification from their Sydney Water contact

4.3 References

Document type	Title
Compliance obligations	Work Health and Safety Act NSW (2011)
Policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing Sydney Water Properties – Security Policy • Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy • Infectious Diseases Management Plan
Other documents	The Australian Immunisation Handbook

5. Ownership

Role	Title
Group	People and Culture
Owner	Brenton Michaels - Head of Safety, Health, and Wellbeing
Author	James Wallace - Manager Safety Capability & Resilience

5.1 Change history

Version	Issue Date	Approved by	Brief description of change and consultation
1	7/07/2023	Brenton Michaels	New document

Appendix 1 Recommended Vaccinations

A1.1 Background Information

Sydney Water has obtained independent medical advice to review Sydney Water's job tasks (as per the Sydney Water Job Dictionaries), to understand where people are at a higher risk of being infected by a Vaccine Preventable Disease.

This review has broken job types down into two categories:

Category A - Administrative and non-operational employees or operational employees not exposed to untreated water. This includes employees such as contracts officers, customer service representatives and general office duty employees.

Category B - Operational field employees likely to be exposed at some stage to untreated water. This would include groups like Water Quality Analysts, Field Sampling Employees, Production Employees, Production Officers, and Hydrographers.

If you are unsure which category you are in, please speak to your People Leader.

A1.2 Recommended Vaccinations - Category A (All Employees)

- Influenza vaccine every year
- Full vaccination against COVID-19 and recommended boosters afterward, or an approved medical exemption
- Pertussis vaccine every ten years

A1.3 Recommended Vaccinations – Category B (employees likely to be exposed to untreated wastewater)

Note: It is highly recommended that employees who are in Category B obtain these vaccinations in addition to those recommended to Category A employees.

- Tetanus boosting every ten years which can be combined with pertussis boosting as above
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Hepatitis A vaccine