

Frequently Asked Questions

Communicable Disease Assessment

1. What is a communicable disease and why is a Communicable Disease Assessment (CDA) important?

- A communicable disease is a highly infectious illness that is spread from one person to another through direct contact, the air, blood and/or body fluids, or contaminated environments in the workplace.
- In alignment with the [AHS Vision and Values](#), AHS encourages all health care workers to share their immunization history. Sharing your immunization history is crucial to protecting you, and those around you from potential communicable disease exposures and supporting safe, healthy work environments.

2. What is a CDA?

- The CDA is an assessment of your immunization history in relation to your job role to determine what vaccine preventable diseases you are protected against or susceptible to in the workplace.
- During a communicable disease outbreak or in specific situations where you may need to take care of a patient who has acquired a communicable disease, your manager or supervisor and Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) will need to be aware of your immunity status so they can act accordingly to protect you, your co-workers, and our patients.
- If you do not meet specific immunity requirements, considerations may be made for work restrictions, reassignment, or exclusion from the workplace.

3. What is not included in a CDA?

- Non-occupational related immunizations (e.g. Hep A for travel).
- Influenza or COVID-19 at this time. However, you are encouraged to submit influenza and COVID records along with your CDA form as per the public health [COVID-19 Immunization Policy](#) and Influenza as per the [Influenza Immunization Policy](#) for the purpose of outbreak management.
- Communicable diseases that are not preventable through immunization (ex: *C. difficile*).
- Personal medical information that is not pertinent to occupationally related immunizations and communicable diseases.

4. Who is required to submit a CDA form to AHS Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)?

- The CDA form submission is required by all new hires and rehires whose duties or obligations of their role will require attendance at a Patient Care Location (PCL). A PCL is any AHS site where there are patients receiving health care, a clinical lab, or

a patient's home or other location where the new hire or rehire interacts with and/or provides care to a patient in the course of their duties on behalf of AHS.

- In accordance with the [CDA Policy](#), if you meet the requirements above you are required to submit a [CDA form](#) to WHS within 90 days of being hired. If you do not submit a form 2 weeks after your date of hire, WHS will send you reminders to submit the form. Your employment is conditional upon submission of this form.
- As a last resort, your employment may be terminated if you do not submit a completed [CDA form](#) within 90 days of being hired.
- CDA requirements impact **non-employee groups** in the following ways:
 1. **Volunteers:** All volunteers in AHS are required to submit a CDA form and available records to WHS as part of their application process if they meet PCL criteria.
 2. **Medical Affairs Staff:** New Medical Affairs staff with an AHS appointment are required to submit a CDA form and available records to AHS Workplace Health and Safety as part of their Medical Affairs Appointment process. *Do not submit your CDA form more than 1 month prior to your start date.
 3. **Midwifery Services:** New midwives with an AHS appointment are required to submit a CDA form and available records to AHS Workplace Health and Safety as part of their Midwifery Service Process.
 4. **Students:** New AHS representatives who are students are not required to submit a CDA form. Post-secondary institutions obtain immunization records prior to a student commencing services with AHS and retain immunization records and are provided to AHS upon request if required.
 5. **Contracted Service Providers:** contracted service providers are not required to submit a CDA form/records to AHS Workplace Health and Safety.

5. I am an existing worker. Should I submit a CDA form?

- If your role requires attendance at a Patient Care Location (any AHS site where there are patients receiving health care, a clinical lab, or a patient's home or other location where you will interact with and/or provide care to a patient in the course of your duties on behalf of AHS), then you are encouraged to submit a CDA form, however, it is not mandatory.
- If you reach out to the Workplace Health and Safety team for updates, your file will be reviewed to see if you have completed a CDA form under the current CDA policy. You may be asked to resubmit a CDA form prior to an assessment or appointment being scheduled.
- Existing workers whose AHS responsibilities do not require attendance at a Patient Care Location should not submit a CDA form. These workers should refer to public health for regular Alberta recommended vaccine updates.

6. I am a remote worker. Do I need to submit a CDA form?

- If your job role is 100 per cent home-based and there is no requirement for you to attend a Patient Care Location as part of your AHS responsibilities, then you are

not required to submit a CDA form. Refer to public health for regular Alberta recommended vaccine updates.

7. I am changing job positions within AHS. Do I need to submit a CDA form?

- If you are transferring positions within AHS it is not mandatory for you to submit a CDA form but you are highly encouraged to do so.
- When you change job positions, the job risk may also change. Workplace Health and Safety highly encourages staff changing positions to submit a CDA form for re-assessment.

8. Why do I have to submit a CDA form?

- For new employee and rehires, it is a condition of employment to submit a completed CDA form and any available immunization records within 90 days of being hired.
- New Medical Affairs staff with an AHS appointment are required to submit a CDA form and available records to WHS as part of the Medical Affairs Appointment process.
- New midwives with an AHS appointment are required to submit a CDA form and available records to AHS Workplace Health and Safety as part of their Midwifery Service Process.
- All volunteers in AHS are required to submit a CDA form and available records to AHS Workplace Health and Safety as part of their application process if they meet PCL criteria.
- Your immunization information will be entered into an AHS database called MySafetyNet (MSN). In the event of a communicable disease outbreak or if you are exposed to a patient who has a vaccine preventable disease, WHS will use this information to determine what follow up is needed.

9. How do I submit a CDA form and available immunization records?

- Obtain a copy of all childhood, travel and any recent immunization records. If you do not have your records, please refer to question 10 for instructions on how to access records.
- Submit a copy of the completed CDA form and all available immunization records to whs.cda@ahs.ca or fax 780-670-3622 (scanned documents or photos are acceptable if attached and in PDF or JPEG format). **WHS cannot accept your CDA form with a digital or electronic signature, including iPad or Tablet signatures. Please print off and physically sign the document before submitting.**
- Submit the CDA form even if you are awaiting immunization records or cannot obtain them, as the submission of the form is the mandatory requirement.

10. Where can I obtain a copy of my immunization records?

- If you were immunized in Alberta, you can print your immunization records from [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca). Print only the screens with your name, date of birth, and

immunizations. You can also request immunization records using the [AHS Zone Map](#) and contact information below:

- Edmonton Zone: 780-413-7985
- Calgary Zone: 403-214-3641
- North, Central & South Zones - To locate a local community or public health centre:
 - Go to [Health Care Locator](#)
 - Select either *Search by Facility Name* if you know the name of the facility, or select *Search by Facility*, then *Public Health Centres* within the drop-down box.
 - Use the next *Location* drop-down box to select city or type in postal code.

- If you were immunized in another Canadian province, contact the local public health office and/or provincial and territorial Department of Health.
- If you were immunized outside of Canada, contact a public health clinic or healthcare provider in the province you landed in as a newcomer to Canada, as they may have a copy of your records.
- You can also try contacting:
 - Your previous education facility
 - Your previous employer/healthcare employer
 - Your physician’s office

11. What is the deadline for new employees to submit a CDA form?

- Submission of the CDA form is required by all new or rehired employees whose duties or obligations of their role will require attendance at a Patient Care Location (any AHS site where there are patients receiving health care, a clinical lab, or a patient’s home or other location where a new or rehired employee will interact with and/or provide care to a patient in the course of your duties on behalf of AHS).

- It is preferred to submit the form within 2 weeks after your date of hire. If you do not submit the form after 3 weeks, WHS will initiate a notification process, prompting you to submit the form. If after 90 days you have not submitted a form, your employment may be terminated.

12. What happens if a new employee does not submit a CDA form?

- If you do not submit a form to WHS, the Occupational Health Nurse (OHN) cannot assess your immunization history and determine if you are adequately protected against vaccine preventable diseases. As a result, you may be temporarily restricted from work, or placed on leave without pay, to reduce the risk of disease transmission in the workplace.
- If a CDA form is not received from a new employee, WHS will send reminders via email to the employee at three and six weeks after their date of hire, with a copy sent to their manager/supervisor. If they have not submitted a CDA form at nine weeks after their date of hire, their manager and Human Resources Business Partnerships (HRBP) will also be notified. If you are a United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) member, UNA will be notified at the 6-week mark as well. It will then be up to their manager and HRBP Advisor to discuss next steps and possible termination with the employee.

13. What happens if I cannot obtain my records?

- If you are unable to obtain a copy of your immunization records or if there will be a significant delay in obtaining a copy of your records, then submit the form as soon as possible and submit the records to WHS when you receive them. Submitting the form is the mandatory requirement. After receiving the form, an OHN will discuss options with you if you have partial records or no records at all.

14. What happens after I submit a CDA form?

- The CDA form requests 2 signatures:
 - A consent for Netcare/AHS paper or electronic system access validation.
 - An acknowledgement to verify the information provided is accurate.
- For an OHN to access your electronic records, please ensure you have signed both sections. If only the acknowledgment is signed, an OHN will only assess the records you have provided to Workplace Health and Safety.
- An OHN will review your immunization records to determine if you are eligible for occupationally related immunization updates. The immunizations may include:
 - Measles
 - Mumps
 - Rubella (German Measles)
 - Varicella (Chicken Pox)
 - Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
 - Hepatitis B immunization
 - Tetanus
 - Diphtheria

- Polio
- Most recent skin test for Tuberculosis
- **For certain Laboratory workers:**
 - Meningococcal immunization
 - Typhoid immunization

15. Is there a fee for immunization?

- Any immunization recommended by an Occupational Health Nurse will be provided free of cost through a WHS clinic or referred by an OHN to an AHS facility.

16. Are influenza or COVID-19 vaccines included in the assessment?

- Influenza and/or COVID-19 will only be included in the assessment if records for Influenza and COVID-19 vaccine are submitted to WHS.
- As per the COVID-19 policy [COVID-19 Immunization Policy](#) health care workers are encouraged to report immunizations to WHS for outbreak management.

17. Is it mandatory to get immunized?

- Rubella immunization for healthcare workers with face to face contact with patients in a health care facility is **required** as per [Alberta Communicable Diseases Regulation](#).
- Immunization for the remaining vaccinations (listed in #14) is a personal choice. However, workers who work in a patient care location are encouraged to get immunized for all vaccine preventable infectious diseases to protect the health and wellbeing of themselves and the people around them.

18. How does a new employee know if they work in a patient care location?

- A patient care location is defined as:
 - Any building, property or site owned, leased, rented or operated by AHS;
 - Where patients receive health care; or
 - Where AHS employees may encounter patients or biological substances that may present a hazard of transmitting a communicable disease.
 - A patient's home or other location where the AHS employees interact with and/or provide healthcare to a patient in the course of duties for or on behalf of AHS.
- **Reminder:** Review your offer letter to determine if you need to submit a CDA form

19. How is personal information stored and used?

- CDA forms and information related to your immunization history are stored in AHS' Workplace Health and Safety system database (MySafetyNet) to help manage health and safety risks to employees, patients and other AHS representatives. This information can only be viewed by AHS Workplace Health and Safety.
- Any immunizations that have not been previously reported to Alberta Health will be entered into the provincial immunization repository, which you can access through [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](#). As per the [Immunization Regulation](#), all practitioners who are

providing an assessment andz providing immunization (such as WHS) are required to report any previously unreported immunizations to Alberta Health.

- In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, the OHN will have access to your immunization records and status. The manager will be advised by the OHN if your immunization status indicates that you will require work restrictions or re-assigned to a non-outbreak area. Any access and disclosure of personal health information is governed by the [AHS Collection, Access, Use & Disclosure of Information Policy](#).

20. I have more questions. Who do I contact?

- If you have questions regarding your immunization status or accessing your records, contact your manager.