

IRMA Reinstates Mask Mandate and Encourages Members to Do the Same

By: Frankie Giannetti; Loss Control Manager at IRMA

August 12, 2021

IRMA [recently provided information](#) regarding newly implemented masking guidance released by the CDC in response to the rapidly rising COVID-19 cases amongst unvaccinated persons and the highly contagious Delta variant. Reflective of this national surge in cases, IRMA anticipates a new uptick in COVID-19 claims. After 3 months of zero COVID-19 claims, we have just received 5 new claims. Initial investigation of these new cases reported to IRMA indicate that the majority of the claimants are first responders that are both unvaccinated and unmasked. IRMA supports the CDC recommendation for indoor masking of all individuals regardless of vaccination status. However, due to the fact that many Illinois regions are considered to have high or substantial transmission rates and considering that there has not yet been a decision to mandate vaccines for workers, IRMA staff have been directed to continue to wear masks regardless of vaccination status when conducting business in both indoor and outdoor public settings.

IRMA employees, its guests, and training participants are required to wear a mask while in the office or while conducting business at a member site. In addition to reinstating a mask mandate for all IRMA staff, daily pre-screen health questionnaires are administered, capacity limits that allow for social distancing in the office remain in place, and hygiene practices are still strongly encouraged as they have been throughout the duration of the pandemic. We are also requiring unvaccinated employees to submit a negative COVID-19 test before coming into the office for meetings.

It is acceptable for employers to mandate that employees follow workplace safety rules pertaining to COVID-19 as they are safety measures that have been recognized by the CDC as effective in curbing infection spread. While it is clear that vaccines are the most effective measure available, these other actions can be taken to reduce infection spread until vaccines are more widely accepted by employees or mandated by employers. IRMA encourages members to strongly consider implementing the CDC recommendations to reinstate masking mandates for employees indoors. In the next month, IRMA will issue guidance to members regarding vaccine mandates. In the meantime, we encourage IRMA members to require employees to wear masks and to remain diligent in keeping the workplace safe from outbreaks.

Please reference our [prior guidance](#) for additional recommendations on how to keep your workplace and all employees healthy as we continue to work together to end this pandemic.

Resources:

[CDC – Vaccine Information Page](#)

[CDC - When to Quarantine](#)

[CDC - When to Isolate](#)

[CDC - When You Can Be Around Others](#)



TO: IRMA EMPLOYEES

FROM: Margo Ely, Executive Director

RE: IRMA COVID Policy August 3, 2021

IRMA continues to maintain policies to protect employees in the workplace from the spread of COVID-19 based on guidance from the State of Illinois, Illinois Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control. This memo updates those policies to comply with the most recent guidance based on the recent surge of infections and particularly the contagiousness of the Delta variant.

Effective immediately, all employees, whether vaccinated or not, must wear a mask when in the office and unable to be socially distant. In addition, employees should wear masks when in common areas of the office and building.

All employees are still required to monitor their health on a daily basis and report COVID-19 like symptoms to the Executive Assistant and Executive Director each day that they are coming into the office through the daily pre-screen form. In addition, all employees must report any COVID-19 infection or exposure to their supervisor and Executive Director and follow the current CDC and IDPH testing, quarantine, and isolation guidance.

Employees should continue to utilize enhanced sanitation protocols in an effort to maintain a health workplace. All employees are encouraged to continue to maintain social distancing in lunchrooms and other gathering spaces in accordance with the State's guidance. Shared food continues to be discouraged in the workplace.

Employees are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the completion of the required series of shots. Employees must provide proof of their vaccination cards to the Executive Director. All employee health information will be kept confidential.

Employees who are not fully vaccinated will be required to submit a negative COVID-19 test dated no more than 72 hours before attending a work meeting where more than 2 people, whether members, vendors, or other employees, will attend. We recommend, and strongly encourage, employees to submit a PCR test rather than a rapid test whenever possible. Individuals, including visitors, coming to the IRMA office are required to wear a mask and follow the IRMA office masking guidelines.



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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: IRMA Risk Management & Training Department
IRMA Agents, Contractors, Consultants and Vendors
IRMA Members

FROM: Margo Ely, Executive Director

DATE: May 26, 2021

RE: COVID-19 Field Services Protocol Directive

I am pleased to report that the field services by IRMA's Risk Management & Training Department are reopening on a limited basis following suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On a case-by-case basis, the IRMA representative will determine if field services are appropriate or if services can be successfully administered remotely. If it is determined the visit will be onsite, IRMA will only schedule representatives and agents that are fully vaccinated.

IRMA offers services to 71 Members located throughout Northeastern Illinois. The reconstitution of onsite services will require IRMA employees and agents to travel between member locations and by the very nature of training and consultant services we provide, will result in the congregation of potentially large numbers of people. We will continue to work with each member on the planning of the visit and will follow all applicable CDC, IDPH and IDCEO guidelines.

While there are now relaxed guidelines regarding mitigation protocol for fully vaccinated persons, this Protocol Directive requires all employees, agents and participants to remain masked while IRMA representatives are onsite. Each member administers COVID-19 guidelines, protocols and vaccination tracking specific for their operations. It is unreasonable to expect IRMA employees and agents to verify that policies are being followed by all participants when their purpose is to provide training or consultation for municipal safety and risk.

Additionally, the meeting spaces should comply with 6-foot social distancing to accommodate all participants, vaccinated or not. All IRMA representatives have the authority to end or leave a field visit should compliance not be met by the participants or host location. Should such an event occur, this will be immediately reported to me for further handling.

I reserve the right to amend this directive as needed as we continue to progress through the pandemic.



Margo Ely
Executive Director

5/26/2021
Date