

## **BIGELOW LABORATORY FOR OCEAN SCIENCES**

### **COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY**

28 August 2023

#### **I. Purpose**

Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences (the “Laboratory”) is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for employees and visitors. Controlling and preventing the spread of and exposure to infectious diseases, like COVID-19, is an important component of workplace safety and health at all times, including during a global pandemic like COVID-19. This policy applies to all employees, interns, and visitors that are in residence at the facility for more than one day. Compliance with this policy is a condition of your continued employment, engagement with laboratory programs, or stay at the laboratory.

#### **II. COVID-19 Vaccination Policy**

All personnel present at the Laboratory for more than one week (5 business days) must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, except those who request and are granted a reasonable accommodation by the Laboratory following the Exemption Process outlined in Section III of this policy. Potential candidates for employment will be notified of the requirements of this policy prior to the start of employment. All new hires are required to comply with this policy as soon as practicable and as a condition of employment.

Individuals are considered vaccinated if they have received at least one dose of a bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. The Laboratory follows the CDC's definition of vaccination in implementing this policy and reserves the right to revise the definition of fully vaccinated based on future changes by the CDC or other health authorities.

Employees, interns, and long-term visitors must provide the Human Resources Department with a copy of their CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card either before their first day of employment or engagement at the laboratory, or on a date otherwise determined and communicated by the Laboratory. In the case of employees, applicants who have not provided proof of vaccination and who have not been granted an accommodation by the Laboratory will not be hired. Employees who have not provided proof of vaccination and who have not been granted an accommodation by the Laboratory will be terminated.

#### **III. Exemption Process**

Employees may request an exemption from vaccination requirements if the vaccine is medically contraindicated for them or medical necessity requires a delay in vaccination. Employees who object to being vaccinated on the basis of a sincerely held religious belief or

practice can also request an exemption from vaccination. Employees should contact Human Resources to complete an exemption request. The Laboratory reserves the right to request additional documentation supporting the need for an accommodation or request for any other exception. The Laboratory will keep confidential any medical information obtained in connection with the employee's request for a reasonable accommodation or other exemption.

The Laboratory makes determinations about requested accommodations and exemption on a case-by-case basis considering various factors and based on an individualized assessment in each situation. The Laboratory strives to make these determinations expeditiously and in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner and will inform the employee after a determination is made. If you have any questions about an accommodation or exemption request you have made, please contact Human Resources.

#### **IV. Supporting COVID-19 Vaccination**

Employees may take up to four hours of work time per dose to travel to the vaccination site, receive a vaccination, and return to work. This would mean a maximum of eight hours of work time for employees receiving two doses. If an employee spends less time getting the vaccine, only the necessary amount of work time will be granted. Employees who take longer than four hours to get the vaccine must send a request to Human Resources, documenting the reason for the additional time. Any additional time requested will be granted, if reasonable, but will not be paid; in that situation, the employee can elect to use accrued sick or vacation time to cover the additional time. If employees are vaccinated outside of their approved work time they will not be compensated for that time. Employees will be permitted to use reasonable vacation or sick time to cover any side effects experienced after receiving the primary dose(s) of the vaccine.

#### **V. Mask Requirements**

All individuals must remain masked in shared spaces, hallways, and bathrooms when U.S. CDC identifies Lincoln County as a region of high COVID-19 new hospital admission rate. ([https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#maps\\_new-admissions-rate-county](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#maps_new-admissions-rate-county)). Residents are expected to be masked in shared living spaces unless all residents feel comfortable unmasking. Masks may be removed when working alone in a lab space or a shared office, if all occupants of the shared office are comfortable with unmasking. Masks may be removed for short periods of time when eating in common spaces. In the event an individual has obtained a vaccination exemption, Bigelow requires that individual to remain masked at all times within the Laboratory. Everyone should feel comfortable choosing to remain masked or asking others to mask while in a shared space. Meeting organizers are welcome to require masks at meetings.

#### **VI. Employee Notification of COVID-19 and Removal from the Workplace**

Employees are required to promptly notify the Human Resources Director (prior to the start of their shift following the learning of their positive test or within 12 hours of learning of

the positive diagnosis) via email or over the phone, when they have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a licensed healthcare provider.

#### Medical Removal from the Workplace

The Laboratory will immediately remove employees from the workplace if they have received a positive COVID-19 test or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a licensed healthcare provider (i.e., immediately send them home or to seek medical care, as appropriate).

#### Return to Work Criteria

Any employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home for 5 days. At that point, if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are resolving (without fever for 24 hours), individuals must remain masked at all times at work another 5 days.

Following a known exposure with a COVID-positive individual, individuals are not required to quarantine unless they have symptoms. Exposed individuals should mask for 5 days unless they obtain a negative COVID test during this time.

### **VII. Confidentiality**

All medical information collected from employees, including vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained because of testing, will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy. Should the Laboratory determine an employee provided false or fraudulent information pursuant to this policy, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment may occur.

### **VIII. Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited**

The Laboratory prohibits any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation, or retaliation for reporting a violation of this policy or any other health and safety concern.