



Published on *Vermont League of Cities and Towns* (<https://www.vlct.org>)

[Home](#) > COVID-19 Vaccine Safety and Deciding to Accept or Decline

COVID-19 Vaccine Safety and Deciding to Accept or Decline

January 19, 2021. In Vermont, the process of vaccinating health care workers, including first responders, is already underway. In response to reports that only modest numbers of first responders are accepting the vaccine, PACIF has compiled information here that employees may find useful when deciding whether to accept or decline it. We encourage our members to share this information with their first responder employees, knowing that while employers and employees both stand to benefit from the immunity that being vaccinated will provide, employees should consult with their healthcare provider to help them make a decision on whether to accept vaccination.

Below are some facts regarding line of duty deaths for first responders. We believe this information may be useful in characterizing the true risk that COVID-19 poses to these employees.

- With regard to law enforcement, COVID-19 was the [leading cause of line of duty deaths for law enforcement officers in 2020](#) [1]. Of the 314 officers who lost their lives serving their communities, 196 died from COVID-19. For perspective, death by gunfire was a distant second, at 45.
- A search of the Firehouse line of duty deaths webpage and the [EMS1 deaths webpage](#) [2] shows that COVID-19 is a leading cause of death for these first responders as well.

Vaccines have been approved by the FDA for emergency use in the United States. While the development and approval of these vaccines was expedited, there is good science behind them, and no shortcuts were taken in the manufacture, testing, or approval process.

- Please see the [brief description of the approval process](#) [3] and the FDA Emergency Use Authorization for the two approved COVID-19 vaccines.
- Vaccine efficacy for the 2-dose Moderna and Pfizer/BioNtech vaccines range from 94.5% to 95%. This is exceptional, particularly when compared to influenza (flu) vaccines, which typically range from 50% to 70% efficacy.

Every day, more people are being vaccinated against COVID-19. According to [bloomberg.com](#) [4], more than 44 million doses have been administered worldwide. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) tracks [vaccine administration in the US](#) [5] and confirms that more than 12 million doses have been administered, with more than 1.6 million persons receiving the required two doses as of January 19, 2021. **There have been very few instances of significant adverse results.** The side effects that are more commonly encountered are similar to what is experienced with a flu shot and can include a short duration headache, fatigue, and low-grade fever.

Healthcare professionals worldwide are recommending that most people take the vaccine.

CDC provides their [assessment of the benefits of the vaccine here](#) [6]. Many people, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, have already been vaccinated with the goal of illustrating the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines to the general public. During a recent discussion with IACP, Dr. Fauci shared his thoughts regarding the vaccine. [IACP members may view that recording here](#) [7].

While taking the vaccine is not a substitute for continued public health measures such as social distancing, hand washing, mask wearing, and limiting contact with others, it does get us closer to reaching the goal of herd immunity. Only then will transmission drop dramatically, because most of the population will have vaccine- or disease-induced antibody protection.

Employees who are thinking of declining the vaccine need to consider the line of work they are in and consult with their healthcare provider so they can make the best decision for themselves, their family, their co-workers, and others that they come into contact with.



Links

[1] <https://www.odmp.org/search/incident/covid-19>

[2] <https://www.ems1.com/coronavirus-covid-19/articles/covid-19-ems-deaths-jk5zWFziwYVYUaM4/>

[3] https://covid19community.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/CEAL%20Infographics_Vaccine%20Journey_12.1.20.jpg

[4] <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-vaccine-tracker-global-distribution/>

[5] <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations>

[6] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>

[7] <https://learn.theiacp.org/products/the-covid-19-vaccine-and-law-enforcement-a-discussion-with-dr-anthony-fauci>