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South African Medical Association
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SASOM position statement on COVID-19 vaccination in employment

The South African Society of Occupational Medicine strongly supports vaccination for all people who are eligible for the vaccination **both in the community and the workplace.**

In the workplace, the Employer has a duty to protect the health and safety of all employees and third parties. COVID-19 poses a biological and psychosocial occupational health hazard. The risk from this hazard varies according to exposure, and in certain industries (e.g. health care), this may be very high both for employees and those they interact with.

1. All the currently available SARS-CoV-2 vaccines offer some protection against infection, severe disease, and death from COVID-19.
2. Vaccinated persons are less likely to infect others.
3. Current knowledge is that COVID-19 vaccination reduces workplace transmission risk and effectively reduces the severity of COVID-19. New variants may alter this.
4. COVID-19 vaccination of those who are less likely to become severely ill themselves, greatly benefits the community.

The Employer's COVID-19 vaccination programme should comply with all legal requirements and be consistent with protecting the health of all employees and third parties.

SASOM members can:

- Assist employers in providing clear, complete and accurate information to promote confidence in the decision to promote or require vaccination of workers.
- Guide employers and employees to assess the biological and psychosocial risk in the workplace, update knowledge on the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, vaccination possibilities, and the impact expected to arise from COVID-19 vaccination of employees.
- Address employees' potential concerns and barriers to vaccination.