

Google ends mandatory COVID-19 vaccine policy to enter offices, says world is in very different place

Google's new update to vaccine policy comes after US President Joe Biden signed the legislation that seeks to end the national emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[By Abhik Sengupta](#): Google is ending its mandatory COVID-19 vaccine policy for its employees globally. In late December 2021, the company told employees to comply with its vaccine policy when they enter the office. At that time, Google faced massive heat from workers, especially in the US, who did not want to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Some workers had also objected to Google's decision to cut salaries if they did not get a vaccine. Google's new update to vaccine policy comes after US President Joe Biden signed the legislation that seeks to end the national emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The company is also trying its best to get employees back to the office more regularly amid a global economic slowdown.

According to an internal memo by Google VP of global security, Chris Rackow and obtained by CNBC, Google says it is "lifting" the company's global vaccine policy as "most people today have some level of immunity against COVID-19." The company will continue to follow "all local regulations" and "maintain our cleaning and ventilation standards in the office," adding that the "world is in a very different place."

The memo reads, "Most people today have some level of immunity against Covid-19, case rates and hospitalisations have stabilised for many months now, and governments all around the world — including the US — are ending emergency declarations, lifting restrictions and ending vaccination mandates. Based on this, we're now lifting our global vaccine policy. This means that vaccines will no longer be required as a condition of entry to any of our buildings."

Google still encourages employees to remain up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines and get a flu shot every year. The company recommends employees stay at home if they show COVID-19-like symptoms.

While Google makes updates to vaccine policy, the company continues to operate in a hybrid model. However, the company is taking strict measures to mitigate excess expenses. Google was known among industry peers for offering one of the best employee perks. In its US offices, employees were eligible for free massage and laundry services and meals.

However, the company recently decided to cut down on perks to save costs. Google is also reserving MacBooks for engineers, while non-engineer staff will get Chromebooks. The company believes that by using Chromebooks, corporates will get a first-hand experience with their own products.

A Google spokesperson also confirmed the cuts to India Today Tech and said, "As we've publicly stated, we have a company goal to make durable savings through improved velocity and efficiency. As part of this, we're making some practical changes to help us remain responsible stewards of our resources while continuing to offer industry-leading perks, benefits, and amenities."

Google has declined to comment on changes applicable across its India offices. Google may continue to follow its COVID-19 protocols in India amid rising COVID-19 cases. India recorded 7,830 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday. As of yesterday, active cases in the country increased to 40,215.