



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

24 SEP 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Army Directive 2021-33 (Approval and Appeal Authorities for Military Medical and Administrative Immunization Exemptions)

1. References.

a. Department of Defense Instruction 1300.17 (Religious Liberty in the Military Services), 1 September 2020

b. Army Regulation (AR) 40-562 (Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis for the Prevention of Infectious Diseases), 7 October 2013

c. AR 600-20 (Army Command Policy), 24 July 2020

2. Purpose. To establish approval and appeal authorities for requests for medical exemptions (temporary or permanent) and administrative exemptions (including religious accommodations) from mandatory immunizations submitted pursuant to references 1b and 1c.

3. Applicability. This policy applies to the Regular Army, Army National Guard/Army National Guard of the United States, and U.S. Army Reserve.

4. Policy.

a. Medical Exemption Requests.

(1) Temporary Medical Exemption Requests (up to 365 days). Healthcare providers are the approval and denial authorities for all temporary medical exemption requests. The term "healthcare providers" refers to physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.

(2) Permanent Medical Exemption Requests.

(a) The initial approval and denial authority for COVID-19 vaccine permanent medical exemption requests is the commanding general of the regional health command where the Soldier is assigned.

(b) The appeal authority for COVID-19 vaccine permanent medical exemption requests is The Surgeon General, whose decisions are final.

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(c) Healthcare providers (as defined in paragraph 4a(1)) are the approval and denial authority for all other required vaccines.

b. Administrative Exemptions.

(1) Religious Accommodation Requests.

(a) Pursuant to AR 600–20, The Surgeon General is the initial approval and denial authority for religious accommodation requests for all immunization exemptions.

(b) The appeal authority is the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, whose decision is final.

(2) Other Administrative Exemption Requests (other than a religious accommodation request). The approval and denial authority for an administrative exemption request as enumerated in reference 1b, table C–2, is the Soldier’s commander at O-6 level or above unless withheld by other law, policy, or regulation. For units without a commander at that level, the first general officer in the chain of command will serve as the approval authority. This decision is final.

5. Supplemental Procedures. Follow the procedures outlined in references 1b and 1c for immunization exemption requests. As necessary, The Surgeon General will facilitate publication of supplemental procedures implementing this guidance within 30 days of its issuance.

6. Proponent. The Surgeon General is the proponent for this policy, responsible for coordinating with the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1 to ensure its provisions are incorporated in AR 40–562 and AR 600–20 within 2 years from the date of this directive.

7. Duration. This directive is rescinded on publication of the revised regulations.



Christine E. Wormuth

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