



SMART/SMACNA Statement on the Importance of Being Vaccinated

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the highly skilled members of SMART and SMACNA have been deemed a key component of the essential workforce. Together we have been able to complete vital projects, while limiting the spread of COVID-19 by following the latest health and safety recommendations from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Unfortunately, with the rise of COVID-19 variants, such as Delta, we find ourselves in the same situation. Both SMART and SMACNA believe that responding to the COVID-19 virus is of critical importance for the health and safety of our members, their families, and communities. **That is why the leadership of SMART and SMACNA is strongly encouraging you and your family members to get vaccinated.** A vaccinated workforce is vital protection for you and your fellow workers.

A vaccinated workforce is also important for our industry. On September 9, 2021, OSHA announced that it is developing a new workplace safety rule. **This new OSHA requirement covers all employers with federal contracts, as well as those employers with more than 100 employees. Covered employers will have to ensure their workforce is fully vaccinated or require any workers who remain unvaccinated to produce a negative test result on at least a weekly basis before coming to work.**

Without compliance our industry will miss out on valuable work hours. These employment opportunities represent more than a trillion dollars of federal public works projects that the President has protected with new and beneficial prevailing wage and registered apprenticeship requirements. This historic level of skilled construction work is expected to last for many years, but to bid on and secure these projects will require that all associated with the employer meet the OSHA rules for mandated vaccination or weekly testing. To ignore these rules means losing out on the billions of dollars in projects, job opportunities and our greatest opportunity in generations to increase union market share.

Simply put, **being vaccinated positively addresses a safety issue for you and your coworkers while not limiting potential employment opportunities.** This is the new reality during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we at SMACNA and SMART want to make you aware of the industry/work implications if you choose to not be vaccinated.

We ALL must join NOW in response to this national industry emergency. Being vaccinated saves lives. In the United States, there have been more than 41 million cases and over 650,000 deaths, or 1 in every 500 residents, but we can play a role in making the weeks and months ahead safer and more financially secure for our families and industry. Health plans are paying for COVID cases and in severe cases, the cost can reach over \$1 million for ICU care, which will dramatically impact our health and welfare funds.

During this continued time of crisis, if SMACNA and SMART can be of any assistance to you on this issue or others, please do not hesitate to reach out to either of our offices. Lastly, we hope that you and your families are doing everything possible to stay safe and healthy.

Joseph Sellers, Jr.
SMART General President

Angela Simon, P.E.
SMACNA President

September 24, 2021

Date