

## What is the Basis for a Religious Exemption in the Workplace?

Federal law allows vaccine exemptions for employees based on religious beliefs under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [confirmed this exemption](#) in May 2021:

*“Federal EEO laws do not prevent an employer from requiring all employees physically entering the workplace to be vaccinated for COVID-19, so long as employers comply with the reasonable accommodation provisions of the ADA and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other EEO considerations,” the commission said in a statement.*

## Sample Process Flow

*Of course, your employer may be different, but the below will give you an idea of what you might expect.*

Be very careful in the process to ensure that you have your employer's written policy that is placing the mandate requirement on you. Download it, print it, or email it to yourself so that you have a copy outside of your work.

In that written HR type policy, they will state what exemption options are allowed.

From there you need to find out how to pursue those exemption options. Usually there is a form that has to be filled out and then sent to someone.

Be very careful that it is completed as requested, sent to the right group, and done by the deadline. They will take any excuse possible to deny it of course, so don't give them any reason to.

If they require something signed from a religious leader, [those are available](#) (even if your own personal religious leader won't sign one). Most often, they are trying to force people to write in one or two sentences their exemption request reason. The goal is that you are communicating to them your 'sincere and deeply held religious beliefs'. Those are the legal words that must be emphasized to have protections in the workplace.

In the resources provided on the website there are short and long responses for use [here](#).

If you receive a denial, plan to appeal it.

DO NOT discuss any of the above verbally over the phone with your boss, co-workers, HR, or employee health. Do not agree to meet with them or have a scheduled call. Request that everything is presented and communicated in writing to have an audit trail. Be very careful not to sign anything that would waive your rights or protections in the workplace.

Again, with all of the above steps, keep copies of the communications and policies outside of your work emails so that you have them for the future.

Unfortunately, the end game for much of this may become class action lawsuits so you want to prove that you complied by their requests, you applied for a legitimate exemption, and you were fired anyways.

[Here](#) are further recommendations about quitting verses being fired.