

DoD is pausing civilian COVID vaccine mandate after court ruling

[Meghann Myers](#) Thursday, Jan 27



The Defense Department is pausing its processing of exemption requests or disciplinary actions for civilian employees who are still not [vaccinated against COVID-19](#), the Pentagon has confirmed, as [a federal lawsuit](#) continues to play out.

A federal judge ruled Friday that the Biden administration doesn't have legal standing to [enforce a mandate](#) for federal employees, which could include

firings.

“This case is not about whether folks should get vaccinated against COVID-19 — the court believes they should,” Texas district Judge Jeffrey Brown wrote. “It is not even about the federal government’s power, exercised properly, to mandate vaccination of its employees. It is instead about whether the president can, with the stroke of a pen and without the input of Congress, require millions of federal employees to undergo a medical procedure as a condition of their employment. That, under the current state of the law as just recently expressed by the Supreme Court, is a bridge too far.”

DoD has not yet released its policy for firing or otherwise disciplining any of its 950,000 civilian employees who refuse to be vaccinated, though exemption requests have been processed.

The Pentagon has not released its numbers of unvaccinated civilians, but [DoD data](#) shows that more than 340,000 have been vaccinated through the department.

“To ensure compliance with the preliminary nationwide injunction issued on January 21, the Department of Defense is not taking any further actions to implement or enforce the civilian employee vaccination as required by Executive Order 14043 at this time,” spokeswoman Lisa Lawrence told Military Times on Thursday.

The military departments began notifying their employees earlier this week.

President Joe Biden’s executive order dropped Sept. 14, requiring all federal employees to get vaccination, secure an exemption or risk disciplinary action.

The Pentagon has not explicitly said that employees would be fired if they did not complete the vaccination requirement. In late November, the department began requiring regular testing for civilians who remain unvaccinated.

About [Meghann Myers](#)

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