



United Airlines Staff with Vaccine Religious Exemptions Face Unpaid Leave

Description

USA: On Wednesday, CNBC [reported](#) that United Airlines is granting religious exemptions to some workers who don't want to comply with the company's vaccine mandate — but there's a major catch.

"United Airlines' employees who are granted exemptions to a company vaccinate mandate for religious reasons will be put on temporary unpaid leave starting next month, the airline told staff Wednesday, citing the recent rise in Covid cases," reported Leslie Josephs. "The airline last month said its 67,000-person U.S. workforce must be vaccinated against Covid-19 this fall, but said it would consider exemptions for religious and personal beliefs as well as medical reasons."

Under the vaccine mandate, which was [approved](#) by the labor union representing the airlines' workers in August, employees have five weeks after a vaccine's full approval by the Food and Drug Administration to submit proof of vaccination. That was triggered when the FDA [gave approval](#) to the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine on August 23.

United is so far the only major U.S. airline to mandate vaccines outright, but other airlines are adopting their own policies to discourage their workers from going unvaccinated, the report noted: "Delta Air Lines is imposing a \$200 surcharge on unvaccinated employees' company health care premiums. Delta, American Airlines and Alaska Airlines will end pay protections for unvaccinated employees who contract or are exposed to Covid-19."

This comes as airlines face a wave of unruly passengers resisting or even attacking flight crew over COVID-19 rules. One passenger on an American Airlines flight to Salt Lake City was filmed grabbing at his mask and [drunkenly snarling like an animal](#) during the flight's final approach. The Federal Aviation Administration has already moved to issue [\\$500,000 in fines](#) against passengers involved in several recent incidents.

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