



Up to 8000 Marines Could Be Dismissed Over COVID Vaccine Mandate

Description

USA: The U.S. Marine Corps may ultimately end up administratively separating up to 8,000 Marines who refuse to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, according to new data released Thursday.

The news came as the Marine Corps stated that they have already separated 169 unvaccinated members, including 66 this past week. A separation from the Marines is akin to a relief of duty or dismissal. It is not punitive like a court-martial; it is solely an administrative maneuver.

Active-duty members of the Marines had a Nov. 28 deadline to either be fully vaccinated or put in an application for a vaccine exemption, and Marine officials had warned that unvaccinated troops would eventually face separation, according to a previous statement.

The Marine Corps is currently the least-vaccinated branch of the military, sitting at a 95 percent rate among active-duty members, according to the most recent statistics.

The U.S Department of Defense (DoD) reported that the Navy is at 96.3 percent, the Air and Space Force stands at 96 percent, and the Army comes in at 98 percent.

Despite these statistics, this does not mean that a number of Marines have not been excluded from the vaccine requirement, as over 1,000 vaccine exemptions have been approved by the Corps. However, these have all been for either administrative or medical reasons, according to Marine Corps spokesperson Captain Andrew Wood.

A majority of the exemption applications, however, have been for claimed religious purposes, of which the Marines have not approved any.

“To date, there have been 3,192 requests for religious accommodation concerning the COVID-19 vaccine mandate. At this time, 3,080 have been processed and zero requests have been approved,” Wood said in a statement. The *Marine Corps Times* previously reported that the corps had not granted a single religious exemption for a vaccine in the past decade.

Given this track record, it is unlikely that the 8,000 Marines facing separation will receive any

exemptions. However, they will not be dishonorably discharged, as the *Times* noted that a recent defense provision requires “service members discharged for vaccine refusal to receive either an honorable or general discharge.”

By Justin Klawans

Date Created
12/27/2021