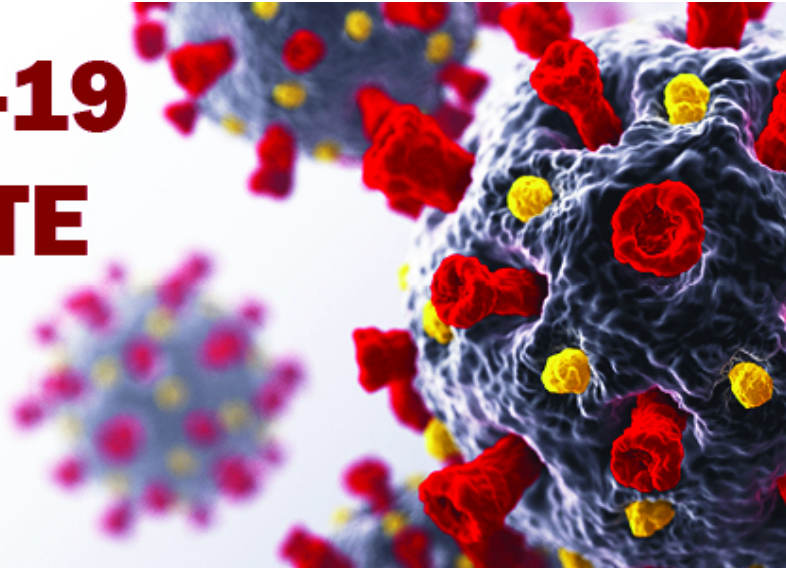


# COVID-19 UPDATE



*Text Alerts: For timely emergency management updates, text EMNCRMA to 31-31-31.*

This afternoon, Governor Cooper announced an estimated timeline for vaccinations to begin in Group 3 beginning with anyone working in child care or in PreK-12 schools on February 24 and followed on March 10 with other frontline essential workers included in Group 3.

## [Governor Cooper Press Release – Group 3 Vaccine Timeline](#)

### **Group 3 Estimated Timeline to begin Vaccinations:**

- **February 24:** [PreK-12 and Childcare Workers](#) (~240,000 people)
- **March 10:** Group 3 frontline essential workers (as detailed below)
- *Currently eligible groups - health care workers, long-term care staff and residents, and people 65 and older – will continue to be prioritized.*

**[Group 3 Frontline Worker Letter Template:](#)** Many NCRMA members have inquired about NCRMA drafting a letter they can provide to their employees identifies them as a Group 3 or Group 4 essential employee. Please note that vaccine distribution is going to be on the honor system and based on the self-attestation of the employee. NC DHHS has confirmed that documentation is not required. NCRMA has drafted this letter template for Group 3 Frontline Workers to use, should you choose to provide one to your employees. NCRMA will follow-up with a similar letter for Group 4.

**[Included in Group 3 “Frontline Essential Workers” \(approximately 583,000 people total\):](#)** Healthcare and public health; Law Enforcement; Public Safety, and Other First Responders; Food and Agriculture; Community or Government-based Operations and Essential Functions; Critical Manufacturing; Commercial Facilities for Essential Goods; Transportation and Logistics; and Education.

- **In order to be classified in Group 3, a worker must meet a two-prong test to be a “frontline essential worker”:**
  1. they are required to report to a workplace and cannot do their job remotely and will be within six feet of other workers or customers and
  2. they are included in the ACIP category of workers as working in an essential worker.
- **Within Group 3 who qualifies as “Commercial Facilities for Essential Goods?”**
  - Based on CISA and ACIP, this category is limited to workers in stores that sell groceries and medicine which would include grocery stores, pharmacies,

convenience stores, dollar stores, super centers, membership clubs as well as retail businesses selling beverages.

- **Within Group 3 who qualifies as “Food and Agriculture”?**
  - Based on CISA and ACIP, this category would include restaurant workers as well as food and beverage supply chain and distribution workers such as those working at distribution centers for food and medicine. CISA also lists individuals that work in greenhouses as well as the growth and distribution of plants and associated products for home gardens.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has released additional guidance for employers of frontline essential workers on how to prepare employees for being vaccinated.

### [NC DHHS Employer Guidance for Vaccinating Employees](#)

**Reminder: North Carolina’s current prioritization plan:**

#### **Group 1: Health care workers & Long-Term Care staff and residents (547,000 people)**

##### [Learn more about Group 1](#)

- Health care workers with in-person patient contact
- Long-term care staff and residents—people in skilled nursing facilities, adult care homes and continuing care retirement communities

#### **Group 2: Older adults (1.2 million people)**

##### [Learn more about Group 2](#)

- Anyone 65 years or older, regardless of health status or living situation

#### **Group 3: Frontline essential workers (583,000 people)**

##### [Learn more about Group 3](#)

- The CDC defines frontline essential workers as workers who are in sectors essential to the functioning of society and who are at substantially higher risk for exposure to COVID-19

#### **Group 4: Adults at high risk for exposure and increased risk of severe illness (4.2 million people)**

##### [Learn more about Group 4](#)

- Anyone 16-64 years old with high-risk medical conditions that increase risk of severe disease from COVID-19 such as cancer, COPD, serious heart conditions, sickle cell disease, Type 2 diabetes, among others, regardless of living situation
- Anyone who is incarcerated or living in other close group living settings who is not already vaccinated due to age, medical condition or job function
- Essential workers not yet vaccinated. The CDC defines these as workers in transportation and logistics, water and wastewater, food service, shelter and housing (e.g., construction), finance (e.g., bank tellers), information technology and communications, energy, legal, media, public safety (e.g., engineers) and public health workers

#### **Group 5: Everyone who wants a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccination (4.5 million people)**

### [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

## **What Group of the Prioritization Plan is North Carolina currently in at this time?**

North Carolina is currently in Group 2 of the prioritization plan - focused on individuals ages 65 years of age and older. There are approximately 1.2 million people in North Carolina in Group 2. NC DHHS is encouraging all counties to remain in the same group to fulfill that group's vaccine needs before the state moves counties into the next group. It is estimated that the state is currently halfway through Group 2.

## **How did North Carolina decide which employees were included in Group 3 and which were in Group 4?**

In determining which employees are included in Group 3 and Group 4 of the prioritization plan, North Carolina chose to use the recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and apply the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) determination of essential critical infrastructure workers. ACIP split the essential worker classifications into two categories with some essential workers included in Group 3 and others into Group 4.

[CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\) Recommendations](#)

[CISA Essential Critical Infrastructure Designations](#)

## **Which essential workers are included in Group 3?**

In order to be classified in Group 3, a worker must meet a two-prong test to be a "frontline essential worker":

1. they are required to report to a workplace and cannot do their job remotely and will be within six feet of other workers or customers and
2. they are included in the ACIP category of workers as working in an essential worker.

[Included in Group 3](#): Healthcare and public health; Law Enforcement; Public Safety, and Other First Responders; Food and Agriculture; Community or Government-based Operations and Essential Functions; Critical Manufacturing; Commercial Facilities for Essential Goods; Transportation and Logistics; and Education.

## **Within Group 3 who qualifies as "Commercial Facilities for Essential Goods?"**

Based on CISA and ACIP, this category is limited to workers in stores that sell groceries and medicine which would include grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores, dollar stores, super centers, membership clubs as well as retail businesses selling beverages.

## **Within Group 3 who qualifies as "Food and Agriculture"?**

Based on CISA and ACIP, this category would include restaurant workers as well as food and beverage supply chain and distribution workers such as those working at distribution centers for food and medicine. CISA also lists individuals that work in greenhouses as well as the growth and distribution of plants and associated products for home gardens.

## **How many people are in Group 3?**

There are approximately 583,000 people in Group 3.

## **Which other essential workers are included in Group 4?**

[Included in Group 4](#): Workers that are employed in the Group 3 industries but who do not work on the frontline - meaning they can work remotely, or they are not regularly within six feet of other workers or customers. Also included in Group 4 are other essential workers who are not already vaccinated including: Chemical; Commercial facilities; Communications and information technology; Defense industrial base; Energy; Financial services; Hazardous materials; Hygiene products and services; Public works and infrastructure support services; Residential facilities, housing and real estate; and Water and wastewater.

## Within Group 4 who qualifies as “Commercial Facilities”?

Group 4 is where most retail workers will end up being classified as CISA defines this category as “workers in retail and non-retail businesses – and necessary merchant wholesalers and distributors - necessary to provide access to hardware and building materials, consumer electronics, technology products, appliances, emergency preparedness supplies, home exercise and fitness supplies, and home school instructional supplies.”

### NC DHHS “Find My Group” Tool:

<https://findmygroup.nc.gov/>

### NC DHHS Updated Resources:

**Flyers and Fact Sheets:** Print and share flyers in your community.

- [Bilingual - Your Best Shot Against COVID-19](#)
- 65 years and older - [English](#) / [Spanish](#)
- Simpler Flyer – [English](#) / [Spanish](#)
- Postcard Size Handout – [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

**Infographic:** Use on your website and digital displays.

- North Carolina’s Vaccine Groups – [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

**Videos:** Post on social media, play on internal displays, and share on websites and in newsletters.

- [English Video Library](#) / [Spanish Video Library](#) featuring faith leaders, community leaders, frontline workers, older North Carolinians and more

**Social Media Graphics:** Post on your social media channels.

- [Social Media Library](#)

**FAQs:** Use a resource. Our frequently asked questions are updated weekly.

- FAQ - English – [English](#) / [Spanish](#) (updated weekly)

**Presentation:** Become a Vaccine Ambassador. Attend a presentation. [Register now](#). These decks are updated weekly.

- Vaccine 101 Deck – [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

**Collect and Share Stories:** Share stories of people telling why they got or plant to get the vaccine. Use this tip sheet to record and share a video or photo.

- Tip Sheet to Record Your Vaccine Selfie – [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

**Website:** Link to our Vaccine websites.

- [YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov](http://YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov)
- [Vacunate.nc.gov](http://Vacunate.nc.gov)

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