



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on August 26, 2021

Big Business Doubles Down on COVID Vaccine Mandates

Corporate America is eagerly embracing COVID vaccine mandates for its employees. Following guidance from the [federal government](#), some cities and [states](#), as well as business giants such as Apple, Google, Morgan Stanley, MGM, Broadway, and Disney, are issuing a new wave of vaccine mandates backed up with different types of penalties. In other words, it's "get vaxxed, or else."

Among such companies that now force their staff to get vaccinated against COVID or face consequences is American multinational investment bank and financial services company Goldman Sachs Group Inc., headquartered in New York City. The bank, which employs roughly 20,000 in the United States, told employees on Tuesday that it will require anyone who enters the bank's American offices, including clients, to be fully vaccinated starting on September 7, according to a *New York Times* [report](#). Those who fail to comply would have to work from home. Those vaccinated returning to office will still face weekly COVID testing.

In addition to that, the bank is reinstating mask requirements throughout office common areas such as elevators, hallways, and gyms, in accordance with [CDC guidance](#) issued in July. At offices in COVID hot spots in San Francisco and Washington, masks will be required at all times, except while someone is eating or drinking.

The *New York Post* [reported](#) on Monday that most employees at Wall Street's big banks welcome vaccine mandates and are dismayed by their unvaccinated colleagues. Kathryn Wylde, president of the non-profit Partnership for New York City, told the *Post*, "Most employees on Wall Street want vaccine mandates for anyone returning to the office." Even though it is reported that more than 90 percent of the Wall Street dwellers are jabbed, at JPMorgan, where the bank has reinstated a mask mandate for all employees regardless of vaccination status, some staffers blame the unvaccinated as the reason for that burdensome measure. Unvaxxed ones, no matter how tiny a proportion of the workforce, are still viewed as "social pariahs" and "losers" whose vaccination status throws shade on their professional skills, per the *Post*.

While banks including Morgan Stanley and Citigroup, much like Goldman Sachs, will allow their unvaccinated employees to work from home, investment fund SkyBridge Capital will simply fire those unvaxxed. "It's get vaxxed or axed at SkyBridge," its co-founder and managing founder Anthony



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Scaramucci told the paper.

The banking and finance industry is set to “improve” its vaccination rate even more, as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, America’s largest lobbying group representing over three million businesses and organizations, [announced](#) this month that it would mandate vaccines for its workforce, including remote workers, once the FDA fully approved them. The Business Roundtable, a nonprofit lobbyist association whose members are [chief executive officers](#) of major U.S. companies such as Amazon, Best Buy, AT&T, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, and numerous others, [welcomed](#) Pfizer and BioNTech getting full FDA approval and called on policymakers to support businesses’ ability to mandate the shots.

Some companies are getting even more creative in twisting their employees’ arms to accept the vaccine. Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian [notified](#) employees Wednesday that they will face \$200 monthly increases on their health-insurance premiums starting November 1 if they aren’t vaccinated against COVID. Bastian noted the company is paying too much for medical insurance of those fallen sick with COVID: “In recent weeks since the rise of the B.1.617.2 [Delta] variant, all Delta employees who have been hospitalized with COVID were not fully vaccinated,” while stating the average hospital stay for COVID-infected employees has cost Delta \$50,000 per person. He argued the \$200 surcharge a month “will be necessary to address the financial risk the decision to not vaccinate is creating for our company.”

The memo also says that starting September 30, COVID pay protection will only be provided to fully vaccinated individuals who happen to have a breakthrough infection. Unvaccinated Delta employees will also be subject to weekly COVID screening and masking in all indoor settings.

Earlier this month, United Airlines became the first airline to [mandate](#) its employees to get vaccinated against COVID. CEO Scott Kirby and President Brett Hart notified their 67,000 American employees that, while they knew some would disagree with the decision, “everyone is safer when everyone is vaccinated.”

The idea that those refusing to get injected with experimental gene therapeutics should be paying more for their insurance has been floating around for a couple of months, since the vaccination trend has hit the wall despite the lucrative incentives. “Don’t want the COVID-19 vaccine? Then pay full cost if you land in the hospital,” [posted](#) MarketWatch. The article states that “there is a direct and clear connection between vaccination and the likelihood of serious complications from COVID” and that “it’s time for the unvaccinated to live up to the ideals of individual freedom and personal responsibility by taking on more of the consequences of their actions.”

Elisabeth Rosenthal, the editor in chief of Kaiser Health News, argued for similar financial penalties ([here](#) and [here](#)) implying that unvaccinated folks “put everyone at risk” by “breeding variants.” Artur L. Caplan, professor of bioethics and the founding head of New York University School of Medicine’s Division of Medical Ethics and Dorit R. Reiss, professor of law at UC Hastings College of Law, [suggest](#) that while people are “free to choose not to vaccinate,” such a decision is clearly a “poor choice that hurts others,” and needs to be paid for.

At the same time, some of health and legal experts [believe](#) imposing such sanctions on the unvaccinated would require legal gymnastics. Among them is Michael Doonan, executive director of the Massachusetts Health Policy Forum, who said that [legally](#), individual insurance costs may only be adjusted because of the holder’s age, geography, tobacco use and family size. “It would take a change in the law, and that would be really hard to do in this polarized political environment we live in,”



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Doonan remarked.



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