**Take these steps if you receive an employee's request to be exempt from COVID-19 vaccine requirement**

As we know, employers will have the ability to require the COVID-19 vaccine to help reduce the spread of the disease in the workplace.

Federal law, however, provides employees the ability to request to be exempt from the requirement due to medical or religious reasons.

Title I of the ADA, Americans with Disabilities Act, requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation to those with a disability.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act requires employers to also accommodate an employee’s sincerely held religious belief.

Both can be approved if the accommodation does not pose a direct threat to the safety of the exempted employee or others in the workplace.

Below are steps you can take if an employee submits an accommodation request.

**Step 1. Confirm employer is covered by the ADA & Title VII**

All employers with 15 or more employees are covered under the ADA and Title VII.

**Step 2. Confirm policies & procedures exist**

Implement or review policies and procedures for handling accommodation requests. Review job descriptions for any requirements for mandatory vaccinations.

**Step 3. Review the exempt request**

Review the request to ensure it falls under the ADA or Title VII, which would require the employer to approve accommodation. Be prepared to reiterate company policy.

**Step 4. Begin the interactive process**

Employers spearhead engaging in communication with the employee and his/her health care provider or religious leader to further review the request.

The request is not required to be in writing, but it is best to have documentation.

**Step 5. Contact the employee**

HR will need to contact the employee, in writing, informing him/her whether the accommodation request has been approved or denied.

**Step 6. Review & modify**

The accommodation process is constantly changing. Continue to review and modify per business needs or an employee’s request.