

DoD Flu Exemption Survey Report

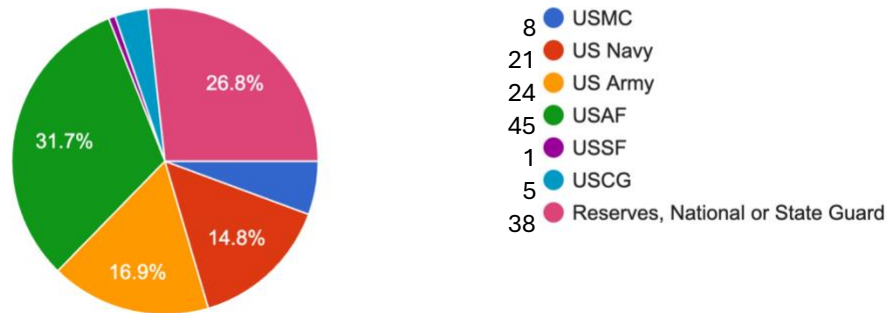
Collection: This survey was solicited and compiled by Captain Joshua Hoppe to collect data on the influenza vaccine religious accommodation and medical exemption process in the Department of Defense. There was a total of 143 service members who provided inputs which sampled every branch of the United States Armed Forces. All questions were optional to complete resulting in the varying numbers of responses on the charts. The responses were collected from 8 March through 1 April 2024.

Summary of Results: Of the 143 respondents, only 13 service members had been granted an accommodation or exemption from the flu vaccine (8 were Active Duty). Over half of the approvals (8) were medical exemptions. Of the 13 approved, 3 were approaching or had an approved retirement/separation date. There were 0 approvals in the Marine Corps, 4 in the Navy, 2 in the Army, 1 in the Air Force, 1 in the Space Force, 0 in the Coast Guard, and 5 in the Reserves, National or State Guard. Additionally, 87 service members confirmed that they had not taken the flu vaccine in previous years without having to request an exemption.

Charts from surveyed questions:

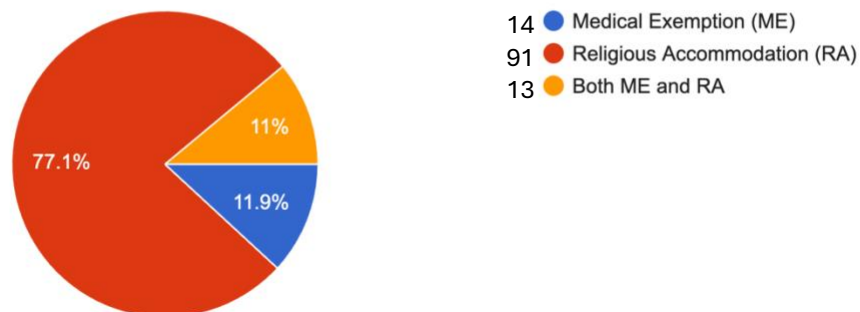
What is your branch of service?

142 responses



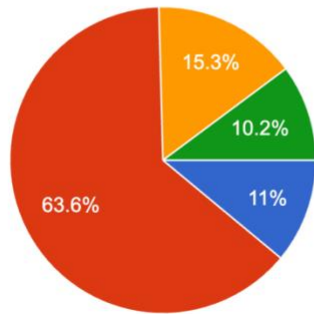
What type of exemption did you request?

118 responses



What was the outcome?

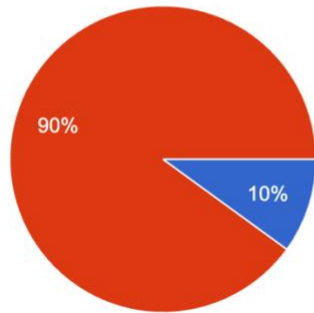
118 responses



- 13 Approved
- 75 Pending (no action)
- 18 Initially Denied and Appealed
- 12 Final Appeal Denied

Did you have a separation/retirement date approved when the final determination was made?

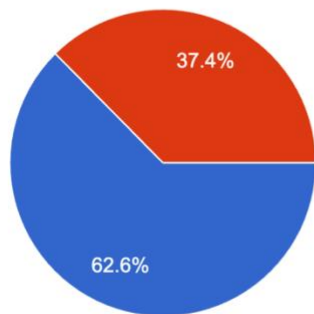
100 responses



- 10 Yes
- 90 No

Have you ever not taken the flu shot but did not request an exemption?

139 responses



- 87 Yes
- 52 No

Approved Religious Accommodations (RA) or Medical Exemptions (ME):

Response #	Service Branch*	RA/ME Approved	Final Determination	Separation Date Approved	Approved Separation Date	Submitted RA/ME for COVID Shot
22	US Navy	RA	Feb 2024	Yes	Oct 2024	RA
24	USSF	ME	Nov 2023	No	N/A	RA & ME
27	Res/Guard	ME	2013-14**	No	N/A	RA & ME
28	Res/Guard	RA & ME	Dec 2023	No	N/A	RA & ME
46	US Army	RA	Mar 2024	No	N/A	RA
62	Res/Guard	RA	Dec 2023	No***	N/A	RA
75	US Navy	ME	Nov 2023	No	N/A	RA & ME
76	US Navy	RA	Jan 2024	No	N/A	RA & ME
92	Res/Guard	ME	Nov 2023	Yes	Jul 2024	RA
102	USAF	ME	Dec 2014	No	N/A	RA & ME
113	US Navy	RA	Feb 2024	No	N/A	RA
115	US Army	ME	Oct 2018	No	N/A	N/A
126	Res/Guard	ME	Sep 2023	No	N/A	RA & ME

*For simplicity, only the Active-Duty branches are broken out and all Reserves, National and State Guards are included together.

**Service member has been deployed several times over the years and has not once been restricted from travel or deployment due to not receiving the flu shots.

***Service member did not have an approved separation date at the time of approval but was nearing retirement when the RA was approved.

Conclusion: The results of this survey showcase the Department of Defense has the ability to approve both Religious Accommodations and Medical Exemptions for the flu vaccine. With the exception of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard, this particular study highlights both RAs and MEs were approved. Additionally, service members had longstanding approvals (10+ years) and were still able to deploy with no issue. Finally, over half of respondents confirmed they did not receive past or current flu vaccines, nor did they suffer negative career impact from this decision.

Point of contact: Joshua Hoppe can be reached with any questions surrounding this survey at [Twitter.com/JHippityHoppe](https://twitter.com/JHippityHoppe).