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by [Tyler Durden](#), [ZeroHedge](#)

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The deadline is looming for US Air Force personnel to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and many thousands are still refusing, according to the latest reports. For many at this point, it's also too late to receive both jabs by the next Tuesday, Nov. 2 deadline. Other branches like the Navy have deadlines coming later in November, but the Air Force will be the first test case as it set the earliest deadline.

The Washington Post is now at the end of the week [reporting that](#) **up to 12,000 Air Force personnel are still declining the vaccine**, causing alarm within the top chain of command who are worried it will impact force readiness, particularly as some forces in key positions face discharge over their vax refusal. **"The fact that it's a choice leading to potential loss to readiness is striking,"** a military policy analyst with the Center for a New American Security Katherine L. Kuzminski, told the *Post*.

Short of full discharge, those refusing the mandate could be charged under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), based on prior Defense Department statements. Currently some class action lawsuits are said to be underway among troops –

including reservists – who argue the mandate violations their individual medical freedom and Constitutional rights.

When it comes to the Air Force especially, there's a risk of losing pilots and technicians – people in elite and highly skilled positions – who have undergone years of prior training at a government and taxpayer cost of millions of dollars. *The Hill* summarizes the dilemma facing military top brass [as follows](#):

*However, with such a significant amount of service members rejecting the vaccine mandate, officials are faced with a dilemma – **take action against those who rejected the mandate and possibly face serious setbacks within units that should be ready for a crisis**, or go back on a wide-scale requirement established in August by the top military leaders.*

If military leaders back down, it could set a precedent allowing personnel to more readily push back against future mandates – for example if a booster shot is ordered – something the Biden administration has signaled it may be prepared to do.

“The Air Force is the third-largest military service at 324,000 members, the Post noted. So **even a small percentage of the ranks can be substantial**,” *The Hill* summarizes further of the situation.

The US Navy is of similar size in terms of active duty members. The Navy and other branches are also at risk of seeing a mass exodus. Earlier this month a report in AFP [underscored](#) that “If all the services take the same hard line that the navy is taking, it **risks losing as many as 46,000 troops**, though presumably more will accept vaccinations before the deadline.” The Navy's deadline is Nov.28 for all to be in full compliance.

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