COVID-19 Vaccine
Emergency vs. Traditional Vaccine Development

Basic Research, Discovery and Pre-Clinical Studies
Researchers have been working with messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines in the lab for more than a decade, but the COVID-19 vaccine is the first authorized mRNA vaccine.

Phase 1, 2 and 3 Clinical Studies and Trials
Phase 1 involves 20-100 healthy volunteers and typically lasts a few months. Phase 2 involves several hundred participants and lasts several months to two years, typically. Phase 3 involves up to several thousand volunteers and can last for several years. The length of each phase was shortened for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Review
Standards for safety and efficacy are similar for EUA and BLA. With an EUA, the known and potential benefits must outweigh known and potential risks.

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Review
ACIP recommended that health care workers, and residents and employees of nursing homes and similar facilities be the first people in the U.S. to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccine is available. Safety monitoring is ongoing
Vaccines under EUA are expected to later submit a BLA with totality of scientific evidence. The first vaccine authorized under EUA was the anthrax vaccine in 2005.

Sources:
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/ensuringssafety/history/index.html
https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines/emergency-use-authorization-vaccines-explained