

# MESSAGING GUIDANCE FOR BC'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

PROOF OF VACCINATION CARD AND REQUIREMENTS



DESTINATION  
BRITISH COLUMBIA®

**COVID-19 RECOVERY PHASE: BC RESTART PLAN, STEP 3**

September 22, 2021

UPDATED: SEPT 22, 2021

## THIS IS FOR:

Destination BC, Regional and Community/City Destination Marketing Organisations, Sector Associations, and Tourism Businesses.

The following document outlines key messaging, information, resources and FAQs for BC's tourism industry as it relates to the proof of vaccination requirements beginning in September 2021.

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## STATUS UPDATE: PROOF OF VACCINATION

Starting September 13, BC will require proof of vaccination for people 12 and older to access some events, services, and businesses.

PLACES PROOF OF VACCINATION IS REQUIRED FOR ENTRY	EXAMPLES OF PLACES THAT DON'T REQUIRE PROOF OF VACCINATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indoor ticketed sporting events</li><li>• Indoor concerts, theatre, dance and symphony events</li><li>• Licensed restaurants and restaurants that offer table service (indoor and patio dining)</li><li>• Pubs, bars and lounges (indoor and patio dining)</li><li>• Nightclubs, casinos and movie theatres</li><li>• Gyms, exercise facilities/studios, pools and recreation facilities</li><li>• Businesses offering indoor group exercise</li><li>• Indoor adult group and team sports for people 22 years old or older</li><li>• Indoor organized events with 50 or more people. For example: Wedding receptions, organized parties, conferences and workshops</li><li>• Indoor organized group recreational classes and activities like pottery, art and choir</li><li>• Post-secondary on-campus student housing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grocery stores, liquor stores and pharmacies</li><li>• Unlicensed restaurants that don't offer table service, like fast food, coffee shops and takeout</li><li>• Salons, hairdressers, barbers</li><li>• Hotels, resorts, cabins and campsites<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does not apply to licensed restaurants or settings and events hosted at the accommodation. (Proof is required for these spaces, aside from the accommodation portion.)</li></ul></li><li>• Banks and credit unions</li><li>• Retail and clothing stores</li><li>• Food banks and shelters</li><li>• Escape rooms, laser tag, indoor paint ball, arcades and bowling alleys (if they are unlicensed or don't offer table service)</li><li>• Post-secondary on-campus cafeterias</li></ul>

## PRIMARY MARKETS:

- ALL

## SUGGESTED KEY MESSAGING:

- Starting September 13, proof of vaccination will be required for those 12 and older to access certain social and recreational events and businesses to help protect people from COVID-19.
- Throughout the pandemic, tourism businesses have continued to implement stringent protocols to keep staff and visitors safe, and will continue to do so at every stage—including the latest requirement to verify proof of vaccination for guests (where applicable), and visitors are asked to return the favour by [travelling responsibly](#).
- We encourage all residents and visitors to [know before you go](#) and familiarize yourself with the health & safety protocols and requirements at each business you plan to visit.
- We look forward to welcoming you, and thank you in advance for respecting the protocols in place to keep us all safe.
- As we adjust business operations, train staff, and implement this new requirement to keep us all safe, please be patient—we're in this together!

## Suggested messaging to add to your website and email correspondence:

If vaccinations are required to attend/enter:

- *"The BC government requires proof of vaccination and picture ID in order to attend/enter this event/facility. Details on what is required are at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard.html>. As well, masks are mandatory in most indoor spaces."*



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If vaccinations are required for some facilities, like a restaurant in a hotel:

- “The BC government requires proof of vaccination and picture ID in order to enter certain places. Though not required to stay at the hotel, proof is required to visit the restaurant. Details are online at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard.html>. As well, masks are mandatory in most indoor spaces.”

There is no way to pre-check vaccination at the time of booking or purchase, so adding this message to the website is a key way to inform people of the need for proof of vaccination.

## HOW IT WORKS

### For BC residents:

- Visit [gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard) to download or print a copy of your BC Vaccine Card which contains a digital QR code.
  - If you aren't able to access the digital BC Vaccine card:
    - Ask a trusted friend, family member or support person to print your card for you.
    - Visit a Service BC centre.
    - Call 1-833-838-2323 to get a copy of your Card mailed to you.
- Have your card ready when entering a business. They will either scan your QR code or visually verify your BC Vaccine Card, and also check your ID.
- During a brief transition period, the Province will allow you to show the vaccination cards you received from immunization clinics, up to an including Sept. 26, after which you'll need to have obtained your official BC Vaccine Card.

### For out-of-province visitors:

- People who aren't from BC must follow the same requirements and provide proof of vaccination and Identification (ID).
  - People from other Canadian provinces or territories must show:
    - Provincially/territorially officially recognized vaccine record
    - Valid government photo ID
  - A printable document that includes all Canadian proof of vaccination records will be available soon.

### For international visitors:

International visitors must show:

- Proof of vaccination they used to enter Canada (all international visitors entering Canada will have used ArriveCAN)
- Passport

### Proof of vaccination information for businesses:

- You have two options to verify proof of vaccination.
  - Visual confirmation: a business or event looks at the customer's vaccine card, and confirms the name matches with their government issued ID, or
  - QR Code: the business or event scans the QR code located on the customer's vaccine card (digital or paper), and confirms the name matches with their government issued ID.

- The most secure option is using the BC Vaccine Card Verifier app (\*App will be available September 13). You don't need to check ID for youth aged 12 to 18.
- To learn more about how to verify proof of vaccination, how to use the app, and sample of vaccine records from other provinces, please visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof/businesses>

## PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT INDUSTRY RESOURCES:

- [Resident and consumer information](#)
- [Information for businesses](#) including how to verify proof of vaccination for BC and out-of-province residents, links to download the BC Vaccine Card Verifier app, print-ready posters and more.
- [BC Vaccine Card – A Guide for Businesses](#)



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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR BC'S TOURISM INDUSTRY TO SHARE WITH VISITORS AND EMPLOYEES

### Know Before You Go!



#### Plan Ahead!

For information on the latest travel updates, including visitor behaviour expectations, driving routes, BC Ferries, BC Parks and outdoor activities, visit: <https://www.hellobc.com/know-before-you-go>



#### We're in this together.

Let's make sure we travel responsibly and respectfully, and the experience is enjoyable for all. We've created infographics for you to share on your social channels, downloadable here: [Dropbox](#) (\*new infographic for the vaccine card)



#### Where to go for local insight and expertise.

If guests are looking for new places to visit or new attractions, there are more than 100 community-owned Visitor Centres and booths across the province that make up BC's Visitor Services Network, visit: <https://www.hellobc.com/plan-your-trip/visitor-information-services/>



#### Catch up on the Camper's Code.

The British Columbia Lodging and Campgrounds Association has created a great resource for camping etiquette, here: <https://www.camperscode.com/>



#### Be a Good Boater.

Boating BC offers a variety of resources on boating etiquette, green boating, protecting our marine mammals, and safe boating. Check them out, here: <https://www.boatingbc.ca/cpages/responsible-boating>



#### Be safe in the backcountry.

Share the Backcountry Lodges of BC Association's [Self-Guided Recommendations](#) and their planning resource page, here: <https://backcountrylodgesofbc.com/backcountry-101-2/know-before-you-go/>



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## FAQ: PROOF OF VACCINATION BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

\*The following will be updated as new information becomes available. If you have a question that is not answered below, please email [COVID19response@DestinationBC.ca](mailto:COVID19response@DestinationBC.ca) and we will work with the Province to gather the information.

You can also reference the Province's Vaccine Card FAQ, at the bottom of this page:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof/businesses>

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### When does the proof of vaccination requirement come into effect?

- The requirement to check proof of vaccination will begin September 13. Businesses will be given time (through the rest of the month) to update operations and train staff. Between September 13, 2021, and October 24, 2021, partially and fully vaccinated people will be able to enter the listed settings and events.
- Starting October 24, 2021, customers must be fully vaccinated with two doses of COVID-19 vaccine to enter certain settings and events.
- The BC Vaccine Card requirement is in place until January 31, 2022, and could be extended.

#### Will Oct. 24 be a return to full capacity for all businesses/events or just those covered by the Order?

The Province may allow a return to full capacity once there is implementation of the BC Vaccine Card on Oct. 24 for those settings covered by the proof of vaccination order, as by that time, all guests in those settings will be fully vaccinated. An update will be provided as soon as the information is available.

#### Will the Province be supplying downloadable signage and language for businesses to use?

- Yes, [there are print-ready posters and guidance documents for businesses](#)
- These materials are available at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof/businesses>

#### Will a piece of government issued ID be required to ensure a person is who they say they are?

- Yes, people 19+ will need to present their proof of vaccination and a piece of government issued photo identification to enter these settings while the PHO Orders are in place.

#### Why would a business go through the process of scanning a QR code on a vaccination card?

- For some businesses and events, it may be quicker and more convenient to scan QR codes instead of visually checking.
- While the QR code is the preferred option for security, both options are acceptable and will be supplemented by ID.
- Some businesses are comfortable with QR codes already, others may be more comfortable with visually confirming the BC Vaccine Card. Either option is an acceptable choice.

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#### Why are there no medical exemptions for people who can't be vaccinated?

- **These are very difficult decisions made by public health.** Dr. Henry has said that if you are unvaccinated, for whatever reason, these kind of indoor settings with lots of people are high risk right now.

#### What do we say to people who are concerned about sharing their medical information with businesses?

- The BC Vaccine Card Verifier app does not save any information. All the business will see is the name of the customer, and whether they are fully or partially vaccinated for COVID-19 or have no record available.

#### What do we say to people who disagree with this policy?

- Vaccination requirements aren't new. Parents are required to report their child's vaccination status when they enroll in school, and you often have to get specific vaccines to be allowed to travel internationally – like yellow fever.
- The Province wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't absolutely necessary to increase vaccination rates, protect people from COVID-19 and help avoid more restrictions on people and businesses.
- But, if they disagree—ask them to be kind and not take their frustrations out on the workers at your local business.
- This was Government's decision, not ours. Asking for proof of vaccination isn't optional for us—it's the law.

#### Will Government provide financial supports to businesses? Some say the proof of vaccine card will place an extra administrative burden on businesses and will likely require the hiring of more staff at time when they cannot afford it.

- Most businesses, particularly restaurants, have already supported the safety of their business by collecting contact tracing information.
- The Province has worked hard to make the Vaccine Card easy for businesses to check at-a-glance—like checking a boarding pass, a ticket for an event or ID upon check-in.
- With the Vaccine Card in place, businesses can stay open and continue to serve their customers with a much lower risk of potential transmission.

#### How will government enforce business compliance with the Order?

- The objective of the BC Vaccine Card is to increase vaccination rates and make settings safer. However, should enforcement be needed, tickets can be issued for violations of the PHO Order.
- Depending on the violation, the fine amount for individuals is \$230 or \$575, and \$2300 for event organizers or owners/operators of locations.
- Enforcement is at the discretion of enforcement officers, including police, liquor and cannabis inspectors, gambling investigators, and conservation officers.

#### What is a business supposed to do about confrontational/non-compliant guests?

- A business has the right to refuse service to people who are not abiding by the Provincial Health Officer's Orders. In fact, it's required.
- WorkSafeBC provides information and assistance with health and safety issues in the workplace.
- Workers or employers who would like to report unsafe working conditions, or any other urgent health and safety concern can call the prevention Information Line 24/7 at 1-888.621-SAFE.
- If it is an imminent threat or concern, workers should contact local law enforcement agencies for immediate support.
- go2HR is also creating an additional module to the BSAFE training for proof of vaccination/BC Vaccine Card, including tips on dealing with challenging front-line scenarios such as unvaccinated members of a group, suspected fraudulent documentation, etc.
- Businesses can use BSAFE for training their staff on this new PHO.



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#### How do businesses deal with international and out-of-province guests who do not have the BC Vaccine Card?

- If a visitor has proof of vaccination from another province, you can accept it in place of a BC Vaccine Card. Samples of proof of vaccination from across Canada will be made available on the Province's business resource page, soon.
- Local businesses will be able to download an easy-to-use reference visual checklist of documents used in other jurisdictions.
- This is similar to what many businesses currently use to confirm proof of age from other provinces.

#### Can staff accept other forms of proof of vaccination, other than the BC Vaccine Card, along with a second piece of ID?

- Until Sept. 26, people can show the vaccine record they received at time of vaccination (at a clinic or pharmacy).
- From Sept. 27 onward, only the BC Vaccine Card or another jurisdiction's approved proof of vaccination will be accepted.
- Local businesses will soon be able to download an easy-to-use reference visual checklist of documents used in other jurisdictions, here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof/businesses#out-of-province>.

#### BUSINESS SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

##### Where is proof of vaccination required for entry?

- Indoor ticketed sporting events
- Indoor concerts, theatre, dance, and symphony events
- Licensed restaurants and restaurants that offer table service (indoor and patio dining)
- Pubs, bars and lounges (indoor and patio dining)
- Nightclubs, casinos and movie theatres
- Gyms, exercise facilities/studios, pools, and recreation facilities
- Businesses offering indoor group exercise
- Indoor adult group and team sports for people 22 years old or older
- Indoor organized events with 50 or more people. For example: Wedding receptions, organized parties, conferences and workshops
- Indoor organized group recreational classes and activities like art, and choir

##### Which food service businesses are included/exempt from the proof of vaccine program?

- Restaurants with indoor dining and outdoor patios, with table service are required to check vaccine cards. Licensed restaurants are required to check vaccine cards. Pubs, lounges, nightclubs are also required to check vaccine cards.

- Coffee shops, drive-throughs, counter services, and takeout are exempt.
- Other safety measures remain in place including mask wearing.

##### Are guests who are simply coming to a restaurant to pick up takeout orders required to present the BC Vaccine Card?

- No.

##### Can someone wait inside to pick up takeout?

- To maintain physical distancing, most restaurants have not allowed customers to wait inside while waiting for their food order.
- The Province encourages businesses to continue to ask customers to wait outside when picking up a takeout order.

##### Why only require proof of vaccination at licensed restaurants and/or those offering table service?

- Dr. Henry and Public Health looked at this closely. There are two main reasons.
- They are seeing that the risk is much lower/lower transmissions in places that don't offer table service - like fast food outlets.
- While some people may sit there for a while, most people are there for a short time, circulating in and out—it's very different than a bar or restaurant where people are there for a longer time, socializing.
- The Province has also been working to make sure that they minimize hardship for people who are already marginalized. They know that many coffee shops and fast-food outlets are important places for people experiencing homelessness—for example, to warm up in cold weather.

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#### Are museums/galleries/science centres, etc. included in the organizations required to check vaccine passports?

- These types of businesses are not currently included in the Order; however, the Province is consulting with the sector on potential future inclusion.
- While these businesses are not currently required to verify proof of vaccination, the mask mandate remains in place for indoor activities.

#### If an event isn't ticketed, do you need proof of vaccine?

- For any event hosting over 50 people indoors, you must verify proof of vaccination before permitting entry. This is required based on the number of attendees, not by tickets.

#### Proof of vaccination is mandatory for post-secondary on-campus housing. Will there be the same mandate for staff housing at tourism businesses (ski hills, resorts, etc.)?

- No, the Province is not exploring a similar requirement at this time.

#### Motorcoach carriers provide services to many clients—sports teams, corporate groups, youth groups, tour groups etc. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that all passengers going to indoor group events have their proof of vaccination?

- The motorcoach carrier is providing a transportation service for the event organizers and attendees. It is the responsibility of the event organizer to check for proof of immunization. This could happen on the motorcoach, to avoid issues or rejection from entry at the event, but it is not required that motorcoach operator conduct this check.

## EMPLOYEE/WORKPLACE RELATED QUESTIONS

### Will the workers in these establishments need to be vaccinated?

- At this time, the Provincial Government is not making vaccination mandatory for employment, other than in specific areas of the health system starting with Long Term Care, Assisted Living, and some other residential facilities.
- Employers are accountable for ensuring their workers' safety and should have in place communicable disease safety plans (that include COVID 19)– including a requirement to stay home when sick, mask wearing where appropriate and regular hand washing. Details can be found here: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart?lang=en>
- Given the higher transmissibility of the delta variant, all businesses should review the adequacy of their plans.
- Businesses or institutions may choose to adopt their own vaccination policies for their employees but would be responsible for doing their own due diligence.
- That could include the decision to require vaccination for their employees, or specific requirements for staff working in their businesses who are not vaccinated, such as more frequent rapid testing and/or mask wearing.
- WorkSafeBC has guidance on [vaccination in the workplace](#).
- go2HR has also prepared a '[COVID-19 Vaccinations in the Workplace](#)' tool kit for tourism and hospitality employers, and has a variety of other resources on the topic of vaccines in the workplace.



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**Will other businesses/organizations be able to set their own requirement for proof of vaccine from staff and guests, beyond those covered by the PHO order, using the Province's new system?**

- The Province has introduced a proof of vaccine requirement for designated settings that removes the need for these businesses to set their own vaccination requirement.
- Public Health's position is that employers can instigate any requirements or restrictions (within the law) on their employees and/or customers—this includes requiring vaccination and/or proof of vaccination, should they choose.
- However, it is advised that individual employers should seek legal advice when developing a mandatory vaccination policy, as they need to address not only workplace health and safety and employees' interests but also consider labour and employment issues. WorkSafeBC has guidance on [vaccination in the workplace](#).
- go2HR has also prepared a '[COVID-19 Vaccinations in the Workplace](#)' tool kit for tourism and hospitality employers, and has a variety of other resources on the topic of vaccines in the workplace.

**Will the BC government offer liability protection (e.g., human rights complaints) to the businesses that are being expected to ask for proof of vaccine?**

- Businesses that are included in the Provincial Health Officer order are protected for actions they take under the Order.
- Businesses that choose to do their own vaccine policy are not covered and must ensure they practice due diligence.

**Will the government offer protection to businesses that mandate that their employees get vaccinated or only hire people who are vaccinated?**

- No. That's an individual business decision.
- If a business decides to require that employees be vaccinated or that they are going to hire only vaccinated employees, then they will need to do their due diligence.

## NEW QUESTIONS

**Are non-staffed facilities, that are NOT open to un-registered guests or the general public, such as hotel pools and spas, required to verify proof of vaccination?**

- No, non-staffed facilities that are NOT open to the general public do not require proof of vaccination in a private business (such as a hotel) i.e. breakfast rooms, pools, change rooms, saunas, and fitness centres.
- Initially, pools were included in the PHO released on August 28 but on September 10, 2021, the province of BC website was updated to move "pools" to a category that doesn't require proof of vaccination.

**Are pools and spas (that are not part of a hotel) required to verify proof of vaccination?**

- No. Initially, pools were included in the PHO released on August 28 but on September 10, 2021, the province of BC website was updated to move "pools" to a category that doesn't require proof of vaccination.

**We don't see our specific business type listed on the PHO website. How do we know whether we are required to verify proof of vaccination?**

- Typically, flow-through type spaces where people can give others room don't require proof of vaccination, such as a museum. This is different than a movie theatre for example, where spacing out could be more difficult. If you're still unsure, please work with your business/sector association, or send questions to: [covid19response@destinationbc.ca](mailto:covid19response@destinationbc.ca).

**Can customers ask if our staff are fully vaccinated? What should we tell them?**

- Some customers might ask if your staff are fully vaccinated. You may want to tell them this: "We are following all the health and safety protocols designed to keep people safe and we are supporting and encouraging all of our employees to get vaccinated. To respect their privacy, I cannot share personal health information about our staff."