



September 11, 2021

Ref: 268244

Mayors, Regional District Chairs, and Chief Administrative Officers of British Columbia

Dear Mayors, Chairs, and CAOs,

I am writing to provide you with a further update on the [recently announced proof of vaccination](#) and [mandatory mask requirements](#) to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Based on Provincial Health Officer direction, on September 7, 2021, the province launched the [BC vaccine card](#). Getting vaccinated and showing proof of vaccination will help protect people and communities, keep businesses open, and allow events to take place. Thank you for everything you have done as local governments to support BC's vaccination program. I would also like to thank UBCM Executive for their [continued support](#) for the Office of the Provincial Health Officer.

I would encourage you to read through "BC Vaccine Card – Keeping People Safe and Businesses Open" at <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/VaccineCard.pdf> for detailed information.

The focus of the proof of vaccination requirement is on choice – businesses, places, and activities that people voluntarily can choose to attend and support if they are vaccinated. That would include, for example, places such as local government owned or operated gyms, and some events in recreational facilities. A detailed list of activities/facilities can be found [here](#).

Under the updated [Provincial Health Order Gathering and Events](#) the proof of vaccination requirement **does not** apply to formal local government business -- including by-elections, council/board meetings, public hearings and open houses. That means that council and board members, staff as well as the public are not required to show a vaccine card to attend these important functions. That applies regardless of the number of people attending. But note that other layers of protections, such as capacity limits and the mask requirement described below, would be relevant. Proof of vaccination is also not required for the public entering local government premises to obtain local government services -- for example, persons entering city hall to drop off a permit application, make a payment, or make a delivery.

The proof of vaccination requirement is not mandatory for employment at this time, other than in specific areas of the health care system starting with long term care, assisted living and some other residential care facilities. Employers are accountable for ensuring their workers' safety, further to WorkSafeBC direction (see <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart>) and should have in place communicable disease plans – including a requirement to stay home when sick, mask

wearing where appropriate and regular hand washing. Employers, including local governments, may choose to adopt their own vaccination policies beyond the designated settings within the policy, labour, and legal contexts they operate within.

Here is a summary of the general rules for the proof of vaccination requirement:

### **Proof of vaccination – how it works**

The requirement applies to all people age 12 years and older. People visiting from outside of B.C. are also required to show proof of vaccination.

There are two key dates:

**As of Sept. 13**, people in British Columbia are required to be **partially vaccinated** with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to access certain businesses and events.

**As of Oct. 24**, people in British Columbia are required to be **fully immunized**, to access the same list of businesses and events.

The current list of settings where proof of vaccination will be required can be found [here](#). It is important to note that the vaccine card requirement is temporary; the requirement is in place until January 31, 2022, subject to possible extension.

### **Showing proof of vaccination – BC Vaccine Card**

People can get their BC Vaccine Card online at [gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard](http://gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard). The BC Vaccine Card will include a secure, individualized QR code and image showing either “vaccinated” or “partially vaccinated”. Once verified, a person will be able to save a digital copy to their mobile device or print a hard copy to present along with their government-issued photo identification when entering designated businesses and events. The QR code only stores information required to verify a COVID-19 vaccination record and is not connected to other health records.

People without access to a computer and printer can have a trusted friend, family member or support person print their card for them. They can also get their card by calling 1-833-838-2323 at the Get Vaccinated call centre and get their printed copy mailed to them, or they can visit a ServiceBC Centre to get one (note that the Vancouver, Surrey, and Burnaby Service BC offices are not offering this service).

It is important to note that there will be a transition period for the BC Vaccine Card. From September 13, 2021 until September 26, 2021, people will still be able to use the paper record provided at their dose 1 or dose 2 vaccine appointment if they don't yet have the BC Vaccine Card. Starting September 27, 2021, the BC Vaccine Card will be the only accepted form of proof.

### **Verifying a BC Vaccine Card**

A BC Vaccine Card can be verified by either scanning the QR code using a QR reader like a smartphone or tablet or visually verifying the person's proof of vaccination, alongside a second piece of government ID. People aged 12 to 18 do not need to show ID. A mobile QR code reader app will be released in app

stores by Sept. 13, 2021 for businesses that choose to scan the QR code. A BC Vaccine Card Guide for Businesses is available [here](#).

### **Mandatory Masks**

As noted above, as of August 25, 2021, [masks are mandatory in all indoor public spaces](#) to help slow the transmission of COVID-19 as B.C. prepares for the fall and respiratory illness season. Subject to some exemptions, people 12 years and older must wear masks in indoor public spaces, **regardless of vaccination status**. These settings include, but are not limited to public spaces of: city halls, libraries, community and recreation centres, areas of office buildings where services to the public are provided, and common areas of sport and fitness centres when not engaged in physical activity. Common areas include lobbies, hallways, public bathrooms and elevators. The mask requirement will be reassessed when proof of vaccination and the BC vaccine card are fully implemented.

Masks are not mandatory in a working area, which means an inside area of a workplace accessed by workers of the workplace and to which the public does not have unrestricted access. This could include, for example, the area of the council or board table in a council/board chamber. The PHO Order – Face Coverings can be found [here](#).

Note that further regional restrictions are in place for the [Interior Health](#) and [Northern Health](#) regions. These restrictions are made by Regional Medical Health Officers under the *Public Health Act*.

### **Enforcement**

Public Health Orders can be enforced during a public health emergency under the *Public Health Act* by [compliance and enforcement officers](#) and the police. WorkSafeBC Investigators will assist through their existing authorities and tools. The province is also working with local governments to target individuals and businesses who fail to comply with PHO orders. This may include revoking business or liquor licenses where issues occur.

The role that bylaw officers have played since the start of the pandemic in support of the public has been critical and they continue to be valuable partners in the effort to reducing the spread of COVID-19. Local bylaw officers can help to follow up on concerns and engage police departments and WorkSafeBC as necessary. They can also provide education and awareness to the public and businesses.

People and businesses can be issued [violation tickets for non-compliance](#) with the Public Health Orders. As always, police should continue to be called in circumstances where there are risks to public safety such as aggressive behavior and/or threats of violence. If violation tickets do not act as a deterrent, or in cases of particularly egregious contraventions or for repeat offenders, police can recommend charges in relation to the offence.

### **Ministerial Order 192**

Ministerial Order 192 (M192) continues to provide authority for local governments to hold electronic meetings and electronic public hearings until it expires on September 28. The expanded electronic meetings and electronic public hearings authorities in [Bill 10](#) (and associated amendments for other

local authorities) will come into force on September 29. At that time local governments may amend their procedure bylaws for electronic meetings. These new authorities enable local governments to choose to amend their procedure bylaws if the council or board wants to continue with electronic regular and committee meetings. For further information please see: [Guidance for Adapting to the New Electronic Meetings Framework](#)

Note that *electronic public hearings* are not the same as electronic meetings. Procedures for public hearings are not required in a local government procedure bylaw; however, those local governments that have included public hearing procedures in their procedure bylaw are encouraged to review and update it as necessary to accommodate the new authorities.

Evidence and data are demonstrating that the best way to get through this pandemic and prevent hospitalizations are vaccines; I would ask for your help in continuing to support the residents in your communities to get vaccinated. If they have received their first dose, a second dose is very important. Getting vaccinated is the best choice to protect ourselves, the people we love, and our communities.

Keep watching [BC's Response to COVID-19](#) website for updates, and please encourage your residents to do the same. We will continue to work with you over the coming weeks, so that you have the support and information you need to move forward based on the Provincial Health Officer and Medical Health Officer's most recent Orders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Faganello', written in a cursive style.

Tara Faganello

Assistant Deputy Minister

pc: Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs  
Gary MacIsaac, Executive Director, UBCM  
Nancy Taylor, Executive Director, LGMA  
Todd Pugh, Executive Director, Civic Info