

Overview

Starting September 13, 2021, proof of vaccination will be required to access certain higher-risk social, recreational, and discretionary events and businesses provincewide to help protect people from COVID-19. With the BC Vaccine Card in place, businesses will be able to stay open and continue to serve their customers with a much lower risk of potential transmission.

Since the start of COVID-19, businesses have been a key partner in helping keep British Columbians safe. As the proof of vaccination program continues, we will continue to share information.

Q&A

1. What businesses and organizations are required to check customers' proof of vaccination?

- By order of the Provincial Health Officer, the following discretionary businesses and organizations must check for customers' proof of vaccination starting on September 13, 2021:
 - Indoor ticketed sporting events with more than 50 people
 - Indoor concerts, theatre, dance and symphony events with more than 50 people
 - Licensed restaurants and cafes and restaurants and cafes that offer table service (indoor and patio dining), including liquor tasting rooms in wineries, breweries, or distilleries.
 - Pubs, bars and lounges (indoor and patio dining)
 - Nightclubs, casinos and movie theatres
 - Gyms, exercise/dance facilities/studios and these activities happening in recreation facilities
 - Businesses offering indoor exercise/fitness
 - Indoor adult group and team sports for people 22 years old or older

- Indoor organized events with 50 or more people. For example: wedding and funeral receptions (outside of a funeral home), organized parties, conferences, trade fairs and workshops
- Indoor organized group recreational classes and activities with more than 50 people like pottery, art and choir
- Post-secondary student housing
- Spectators at indoor youth sporting events with more than 50 people

2. What is the BC Vaccine Card?

- The BC Vaccine Card will allow customers to conveniently and securely show their proof of vaccination using a digital or paper version.
- The BC Vaccine Card will show that a customer is either fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated or has no record found.
- The BC Vaccine Card has a QR code which is a scannable square-shaped image with barcode technology, that is readable by a digital device, like a smartphone or tablet.

3. When will the BC Vaccine Card be in place?

- Businesses will be required to ask for proof of vaccination effective September 13, 2021.
- The requirement to use the BC Vaccine Card as proof of vaccination will be phased in to allow people time to transition to their new cards.
- From September 13, 2021 to September 26, 2021, people will also be able to use the vaccination records they got at B.C. vaccine clinics or pharmacies as valid proof of vaccination.
- Starting September 27, 2021, only the BC Vaccine Card, printed or digital, will be accepted for people vaccinated in B.C.
- For examples of British Columbia immunization records that British Columbians can use until September 26, 2021 visit, gov.bc.ca/vaccinocard-businesses

4. When do I have to check customers' proof of vaccination?

- For food and liquor serving premises, we recommend checking proof of vaccination as customers enter.
- However, where that is not feasible the actual requirement in the order is that it requires that proof of vaccination must be checked before the customer is served.
- An operator must not permit a customer who has not provided proof of vaccination to remain on the premises.
- For all other businesses and settings covered by the order, people who need to show proof of vaccination must not be allowed to enter or remain without providing that proof.

5. What are the details around vaccination timing?

- On September 13, 2021, customers will be required to provide proof of partial vaccination – at least one dose – to enter certain settings and events (see Q1 for the list).
- Starting October 24, 2021, customers must be fully vaccinated with two doses of COVID-19 vaccine to enter certain settings and events (see Q1 for the list).
- Between September 13, 2021 and October 24, 2021, partially and fully vaccinated people will be able to enter these settings and events.

6. How long will the BC Vaccine Card be in place for?

- Public health continues to closely monitor case counts, hospitalizations, and deaths.
- At this time, we are still seeing a surge in cases primarily in groups of unvaccinated people.
- The BC Vaccine Card requirement is in place until January 31, 2022 and could be extended.
- We know the best way to put the pandemic behind us is through vaccination.
- Vaccines are safe, effective and allow us to return to doing the things we love.

7. How does a business confirm a customer's proof of vaccination?

- Customers will get their BC Vaccine Card online at: gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard, or the Provincial Vaccine Call Centre, and will have a paper or a digital copy to show when they enter a business or event.

- A sample of what the BC Vaccine Card looks like can be found at: gov.bc.ca/vaccinocard-businesses
 - There are two ways for businesses to confirm proof of vaccination:
 1. Visually – verify the person’s BC Vaccine Card presented on paper or on a person’s phone.
 2. QR Code – the business uses the BC Vaccine Verifier app to scan the QR code included on the BC Vaccine Card on the person’s phone or paper BC Vaccine Card.
 - There are three results for vaccination proof: vaccinated, partially vaccinated or no record found. For a visual reference of each result, visit: gov.bc.ca/vaccinocard-businesses
 - Whichever way the customer chooses to present their BC Vaccine Card is up to them, but they must also show a piece of government issued photo identification. Identification is only required for persons aged 19 years and older.
 - A business may choose whether to visually verify or to scan the QR code.
 - The QR code has been put in place to bring a greater degree of security and minimize the possibility of the BC Vaccine Card being altered or forged.
 - The BC Vaccine Verifier app does not save any information.
 - A business cannot record the fact that a customer has provided proof of being vaccinated without the customer’s written consent.
 - A business cannot take a photo of the customers BC Vaccine Card, even if they consent.
 - The BC Vaccine Card QR code only works with the BC QR reader. We are working with other provinces and the federal government to potentially align the vaccine cards in the future.
- 8. Do I have to check a regular customer’s proof of vaccine every time they come in – even if they are coming and going?**
- Every time a customer comes into a location, proof of vaccination must be confirmed.
 - By making the vaccine verification program consistent, this minimizes the responsibility on the business to remember the last time they checked for proof of vaccination and will also provide for staff changes (e.g., breaks, vacations) as they occur.

9. Who is required to show proof of vaccination?

- The requirement to show proof of vaccination applies to all customers 12+ in the settings identified by the Provincial Health Officer (see Q1) as being required to check for proof of vaccination.
- This applies in all geographic regions of B.C., to all people 12+ in B.C., including visitors.
- Businesses should not request to see an employee's proof of vaccination as part of the BC Vaccine Card program unless the employee is attending as a customer.
- Businesses or institutions may choose to adopt their own vaccination policies for their employees but would be responsible for doing their own due diligence.

10. What types of identification are accepted?

- Government issued photo identification, such as a driver's licence, BC Services Card, or a passport is required for people 19 years and older.
- Youth 12 to 18 do not have to show identification – just proof of vaccination.
- Some people may have their legal name on their vaccine card and a preferred or common name on their identification. In this case, businesses can ask for a secondary piece of ID and use their discretion.

11. What proof of vaccination will be required for people from out of province?

- If a person has proof of vaccination from another province, they can use it in place of a BC Vaccine Card.
- This includes people who are part of the Canadian Armed Forces.
- People from other Canadian provinces or territories must show:
 1. Provincially/territorially officially recognized vaccine record
 2. Valid government photo identification
- International visitors must show:
 1. Proof of vaccination they used to enter Canada
 2. Valid Passport
- For examples of Canadian immunization records from other jurisdictions visit, gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses

- The BC Vaccine Card QR code only works with the BC QR reader. We are working with other provinces and the federal government to potentially align the vaccine cards in the future.

12. Where do I get the BC Vaccine Verifier app?

- The BC Vaccine Verifier app is available for download from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.
- The app is only for businesses. Individuals can get their proof of vaccination at: gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard, or the Provincial Vaccine Call Centre.
- Once the app is downloaded, any future updates will be pushed through the app stores, which is the regular process for apps.
- Businesses can choose to visually verify a customer's proof of vaccination instead of using the BC Vaccine Verifier app.
- The BC Vaccine Card QR code only works with the BC QR reader. We are working with other provinces and the federal government to potentially align the vaccine cards in the future.

13. What is a QR Code?

- A QR code is a type of barcode that contains information and can be read by a machine.
- Using it is simple – like showing your boarding pass to board a flight, or a ticket at an event.
- In this case, the business or event will read the individualized QR code (included in a customer's BC Vaccine Card) with the BC Vaccine Verifier app that will show the customer's name and COVID-19 proof of vaccination.

14. Do I have to purchase a special piece of equipment to read a QR code?

- You can use any compatible Android, iPhone or tablet to download the QR code app.
- The BC Card Verifier app is supported on mobile devices with a camera: e.g., Apple, Android – mobile phone and tablets.
- Operating system required is:
 - Apple: iOS 11 or greater
 - Android: 8.1 or greater
- Businesses can choose to visually verify a customer's proof of vaccination, instead of using the BC Vaccine Verifier app.

15. Business QR Code Scanning and verification steps.

- The QR code process is used in many business settings and was designed to be simple for users on both sides.
- Many B.C. restaurants and events have been using QR codes for menus and tickets. You can also find demonstrations through a quick online search.
- Here are the steps for a business that chooses to scan customers' QR codes using the BC Vaccine Verifier app:
 - Step 1 – Download the BC Vaccine Card Verifier application from Google Play Store or Apple App store and enable camera access.
 - Step 2 – Scan the customer's paper or digital copy of the BC Vaccine Card QR code.
 - Step 3 – Check proof of vaccination and validate name with government issued photo identification if 19+.
- When the QR code registers, it will display one of three results: vaccinated, partially vaccinated or no record found. A visual reference of the three results can be found at gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses

16. Are there medical exemptions for people who are not vaccinated?

- 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.
- There will be an exemption process in place for extremely rare circumstances, involving a person's doctor and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer. However, these instances will be extremely rare.

17. How can I ensure that proof of vaccination, locally or outside of B.C., is valid?

- The proof of vaccination would need to match the format for the relevant jurisdiction, as set out in the visual lists of documents.
- Individuals from outside the province will show that proof of vaccination, alongside valid government identification (for those 19+).
- For examples of British Columbia immunization records that British Columbians can use until September 26, 2021 and examples of Canadian immunization records visit, gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses

18. Will the B.C. government offer legal liability protection to the businesses that are being expected to ask for proof of vaccine?

- Businesses that are included in the BC Vaccine Card provincial health order are protected for actions they take under the order.
- Businesses that choose to do their own vaccine policy beyond the order are not covered and must ensure they practice due diligence.

19. How do I respond to a customer that is concerned about the privacy of their medical information?

- A business can let their customers know that the BC Vaccine Verifier app does not save any information.
- All a business will see on the digital BC Vaccine Card is the customer's name, and whether they are fully or partially vaccinated for COVID-19 or have no record available.
- The QR code contains the absolute minimum information required to verify a vaccination record and is not connected to other health records.
- Businesses can let customers know that the Privacy Commissioner was engaged during the development of the BC Vaccine Verifier app and the digital BC Vaccine Card.
- A visual reference of the results from using the verifier app can be found at: gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses
- A business cannot record the fact that a customer has provided proof of being vaccinated without the customer's written consent.
- A business cannot take a photo of the customers BC Vaccine Card, even if they consent.

20. How should a business record a customer's consent to record that they have provided their proof of vaccination?

- A business will need to ensure the customer understands that they are providing consent to have the fact that they have provided proof of vaccination recorded, and that you are asking to keep a record of their vaccination status only to make it easier for return visits.
- The business must obtain the customer's consent in writing and should keep the customer's consent in writing for the future if needed.
- A business cannot take a photo of the customers BC Vaccine Card, even if they consent.

- A business must delete all records once the proof of vaccination requirement is lifted.
- The business should also have a process in place to allow a customer to withdraw consent.
- Consent to record the fact that someone has provided proof of vaccination is best used for businesses that have a pre-existing account-based entry system (e.g., recreation centres, gyms).

21. What should a business do if they need more information?

- We encourage businesses to reach out to their associations if they have any questions or visit gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses for more information.
- Businesses can also call 1 833-838-2323, select option 1, then option 3.
- Translators are available to support different languages.
- The help line is open seven days a week – 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (PST).

22. How will you enforce businesses' compliance with the order?

- Fines can be issued for violations of the Gatherings and Events and Food and Liquor Serving Premises orders.
- Depending on the violation, the fine amount for individuals is \$230 or \$575, and \$2,300 for event organizers or owners/operators of locations.
- Employees will not be fined for failing to check someone's proof of vaccination. Owners/organizers are responsible for ensuring that the provincial health order is followed.
- Enforcement is at the discretion of enforcement officers, including police, liquor and cannabis inspectors, gambling investigators and conservation officers.
- As has been the case throughout the pandemic, non-emergency contraventions of PHO orders can be communicated through local government bylaw offices to follow up on concerns and refer to other enforcement officers as needed.
- As always, police should continue to be called in circumstances where there are risks to public safety, such as aggressive behaviour.
- More information on violation tickets can be found at:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/violation-tickets>

23. What help is being provided to support businesses navigating these new rules?

- A package of materials that includes a FAQ, posters and visual guides have been provided to help businesses navigate the implementation of the BC Vaccine Card.
- For examples of British Columbia immunization records that British Columbians can use until September 26, 2021 and examples of Canadian immunization records visit, gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses
- We encourage businesses to reach out to their associations if they have any questions or visit gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses for more information.
- Businesses can also call 1 833-838-2323, select option 1, then option 3.
- Translators are available to support different languages.
- The help line is open seven days a week – 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (PST).
- We will continue to work closely with our partners, stakeholders and the business community to keep people informed with the latest information.

24. How should restaurant staff deal with confrontational non-vaccinated guests?

- We encourage all British Columbians to stay kind, calm and courteous.
- A business has the right to refuse service to people who are not abiding by the provincial health order.
- If any employee feels threatened, they should avoid confrontation and call 911. Abuse toward people trying to enforce this order will not be tolerated.

25. How are suppliers and industry partners such as delivery drivers, etc. impacted by the BC Vaccination Card program?

- Proof of vaccination is not required for suppliers and delivery drivers – only for customers.

26. Do customers with pick up orders have to show proof of vaccination?

- Customers are not required to present proof of vaccination when picking up a takeout order.
- To maintain social distancing, most restaurants have not allowed customers to wait inside while waiting for their food order.
- We encourage businesses to continue to ask customers to wait outside when picking up a takeout order that is not ready.

27. Where can a business call for help, including tech support and general inquiries?

- Businesses can call 1 833-838-2323, select option 1, then option 3.
- Translators are available to support different languages.
- The help line is open seven days a week – 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (PST).

28. Are masks still required even though proof of vaccination is now required?

- Yes, masks continue to be required in all indoor public spaces for people aged 12+ until the order is lifted or revised by the Provincial Health Officer.