



# ≡ BC RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICES ASSOCIATION GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING BC'S COVID-19 VACCINE CARD



The British Columbia Restaurant and Foodservices Association is a dedicated resource to help restaurateurs grow and succeed in business in our province.

# GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING BC'S COVID-19 VACCINE CARD

## The Government of BC's Vaccine Card Program goes into effect Monday, September 13, 2021.

The COVID-19 vaccination card allows those who have received their vaccine to gain admittance to certain non-essential activities including restaurants, pubs and bars:

- Approval in stage 1: one vaccination by September 13
- Approval in stage 2: two vaccinations by October 24

The requirement applies to all people born in 2009 or earlier. It is in place until January 31, 2022, and could be extended.

### How the vaccine card works for BC Residents

**STEP 1:** Your customers need to register for their vaccine card online at [www.gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard](http://www.gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard) or by phone 1.833.838.2323.

**STEP 2:** They save their digital BC Vaccine Card with a custom QR code on their phone or print it out. The card will display the person's legal name. It will be green for fully vaccinated and blue for partially vaccinated.

**STEP 3:** When they arrive at a business, the customer will show their custom QR code displaying either partial (blue) or full (green) vaccination status. Proof can be shown in one of three ways:

- On paper
- A screen capture or PDF on their mobile device
- On the BC Services Card app

### For all impacted premises: Here is how the vaccine card works

#### STEP 1:

**Business with Host Station** - Assign a staff person to check vaccine cards and IDs in order to check guests as they enter your business.

**No Host Station** - Without a host station, you have the option of create a protocol for staff to check the Vaccine Card at the table prior to service.

**Note:** Businesses must not serve a patron who has not provided the operator with a proof of having received the required level of vaccination.

THIS DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED IN COLLABORATION with the Alliance of Beverage of Licensees, the BC Craft Brewers Guild, the Wine Growers British Columbia and the Craft Distillers Guild of BC.

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**STEP 2:** Staff person reviews guest documents.

## **BC RESIDENTS:**

**Guests 12 to 18:** Staff check, visually or using BC Vaccine Card Verifier app, a customer's vaccine card status. The app will verify their proof of vaccination. If you check visually, make sure the person's name and vaccination status are reviewed.

**Guests 19+:** Staff check, visually or using the BC Vaccine Card Verifier app, a customer's vaccine card status. Then review their government-issued photo ID. Names on the vaccine card and ID should match.

**Note:** Until September 26, guests can show their vaccination record from a mass vaccination clinic or a pharmacy. From September 27 onwards, the BC Vaccine Card with QR code must be presented by all BC guests.

## **CANADIAN VISITORS:**

**Guests 12 to 18:** Staff visually review a vaccination record from the province or territory of residence.

**Guests 19+:** Staff visually review an approved vaccine record from the province or territory of residence and a corresponding government issued photo ID. Names on the vaccination record and ID must match.

## **INTERNATIONAL VISITORS:**

**Guests 12 to 18:** Staff visually review the ArriveCan record for the guest.

**Guest 19+:** Staff visually review the ArriveCan record for the guest and match it to a corresponding government issued photo ID (passport or driver's license) from their country of residence.

**STEP 3:** Staff admit/serve guests that meet the vaccination threshold.  
Guests must have 1 vaccination by September 13 and 2 vaccinations by October 24.

**STEP 4:** If you are a private club or operate with members, you may ask the guest to sign a document allowing you to save vaccination status to reduce interactions for future visits.  
Do not save any information about the guest's vaccine status without their express consent.

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## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### What you need to know

#### 1. Is my business required to check vaccine cards?

If you are any of the following types of food and liquor serving businesses, you are required to check vaccination cards for your guests, regardless of whether they dine inside or outside:

- Food primary with table service including cafés
- Liquor primary establishment of any type: restaurant, café, pub, bar, lounge or nightclub
- Liquor manufacturing facilities that have tasting rooms with seating
- Private clubs
- Restaurants (licensed and unlicensed) with buffet service

Please note: it is not optional to participate in the Vaccine Card program in BC if you are any of the above business types. There are fines for your business **starting at \$2300** if you choose to act against this Public Health Order.

For a full list of places that require proof of vaccination, please [click here](#).

#### 2. What foodservice businesses are expressly exempt?

- food trucks
- drive-thrus
- pre-ordered takeout or delivery
- quick service or fast-food restaurants with counter service (must be an un-licensed facility)
- Businesses where the entrance to the business is not controlled by the operator – for example within retail, school or hospital locations:
  - Food courts and other foodservice located inside retail (e.g.: café in a grocery store)
  - Cafeterias in hospitals, licensed care facilities, assisted living residences, independent living facilities, correctional facilities
  - Workplace kitchens or cafeterias including industrial camps
  - Schools: public or independent schools, post-secondary institutions
  - Cafeterias that serve people other than the general public

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## 3. If I operate a winery, brewery, distillery or cidery, when must I check the vaccine card?

**Retail:** Consumers coming in strictly to purchase off sales package products will NOT require the vaccine card.

**Tasting/sampling:** Consumers will be permitted to taste /sample product prior to purchase (i.e. limited amount 1/3 of oz spirits, 1 oz beer or wine) will NOT require the vaccine card.

**Seated tasting/sampling** WILL require the vaccine card.

**Lounge, restaurant, picnic and all seating areas:** Both indoor and outdoor WILL require the vaccine card.

## 4. If my business is not on the above list, am I exempt?

Please review the list of places that require proof of vaccination on the [BC government website](#).

If you are still confused, please reach out to BCRFA at 604.669.2239 and we will help you determine what your business requirements are under this health order.

## 5. Why is the Vaccine Card program being implemented?

The Vaccine Card program is designed to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The goal is to work with the businesses determined to be discretionary under this Public Health Order to stay open and continue to serve their customers with a much lower risk of potential transmission.

## 6. Restaurants and other licensed premises often host events. What events are required to check vaccine cards?

Organized indoor events with 50 or more people (e.g., wedding receptions, organized parties, conferences, workshops) are required to check vaccine cards.

If you host an outdoor event or an indoor event under 50 people in your restaurant, these private events must be in a separate space from your restaurant guests.

## 7. What are my staff options for checking Vaccine cards?

You can choose to:

- **Visually verify** the person's BC Vaccine Card presented on paper or on a person's phone.
- **Scan the QR Code** using 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. The app will be available on September 13.

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## 8. What does the BC Vaccine Card look like?

The BC Vaccine Card is a custom record that displays the customer's legal name, their vaccination status and a QR code. The QR code is a scannable square barcode, that is readable by a digital device, like a smartphone or tablet. It can be shown as a printed document or a digital image (PDF or in the App).

The vaccination status options are fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated or no record found.

Partially vaccinated



Fully vaccinated



No record found



## 9. What is the implementation timeline for the BC Vaccine Card?

Businesses will be required to ask for proof of vaccination effective September 13, 2021.

The BC Vaccine Card registration for the public opened September 7, 2021.

Businesses can download the BC Vaccine Card Verifier app to use for scanning purposes no later than September 13, 2021. Apple App Store has the app available now.

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.

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

The BC Vaccine Card program is in place until January 31, 2022 and could be extended.

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## **11. If my business chooses to use the BC Vaccine Verifier app, what is involved?**

The BC Vaccine Verifier app will be ready to download by September 13, 2021 from the Google Play Store or Apple App store. The operating system requirements are Apple: iOS 11 or greater, Android: 8.1 or greater.

Your business must download the app using an Internet signal. However, once the app is on your phone, tablet or digital device, the Internet is not required.

Once the app is on your device, you enable the camera and use it to scan the customer's QR code. Once the card has been scanned, the vaccination status of the guest will be displayed.

When the QR code registers, it will display one of three results: vaccinated, partially vaccinated or no record found – samples above.

### **The BC Vaccine Verifier app does not save any information.**

A business cannot record a customer's vaccine status without their explicit consent.

By scanning the QR code, you bring a greater degree of security and minimize the possibility of the BC Vaccine Card being altered or forged.

### **A. What is a QR Code?**

A QR code is a type of barcode that contains custom information and can be read by a custom computer program.

In this case, the business or event will scan the individualized QR code (included in a customer's BC Vaccine Card) with the BC Vaccine Verifier app. When scanned, the app will show the customer's name and COVID-19 proof of vaccination.

### **B. Do I have to purchase a special piece of equipment to read a QR code?**

The BC Card Verifier app is supported on mobile devices with a camera: e.g., Apple, Android – mobile phone and tablets. You can use any compatible Android, iPhone or tablet to download the QR code app.

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## **12. 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 to dine or taste, proof of vaccination must be confirmed prior to being served.

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.

If you operate a private club or other membership location, you can expressly request the written consent of your members to save their vaccination status for ease of re-entry. This is covered under a separate question.

## **13. Who is required to show proof of vaccination?**

The requirement to show proof of vaccination applies to all people 12+ in the settings identified by the Provincial Health Officer (see Q1).

This applies in all geographic regions of B.C., to all people 12+ in B.C., including visitors.

## **14. What types of identification are accepted?**

Government issued photo identification, such as a driver's license, 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 may ask for a secondary piece of ID and use their discretion.

## **15. What proof of vaccine 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:

- Provincially/territorially officially recognized vaccine record
- Valid government photo ID.

International visitors must show:

- Proof of vaccination they used to enter Canada (ArriveCan App)
- Valid Passport or government issued photo ID, like a driver's license.

A visual reference checklist of documents issued in other jurisdictions will be available online: [gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses](http://gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses)

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## **16. Are there any medical or religious exemptions for people who are not vaccinated?**

No. There are no exemptions for unvaccinated individuals as these are discretionary services. Restaurant customers who do not wish to show their proof of vaccination status are welcome to use take out and delivery or visit a food truck, an unlicensed quick service retail location or a drive thru.

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

The proof of vaccination for BC residents will be consistent and your staff will be familiar with approved BC ID, driver's licenses or BC Services Cards.

For visitors from other provinces or other countries, this will be more complicated. If you have a large number of visitors from outside BC, please review the checklist of documents issued in other jurisdictions that will be posted to: [gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses](http://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?**

This is a required program under the authority of the Provincial Public Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry. Businesses listed in Q1 must participate in the Vaccine Card Program. The fines for a business not complying start at \$2300.

The businesses that are legally required to check their customers' BC Vaccine Card listed in Q1 will be protected for actions they take under the regulations outlined in 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?**

Within the registration system, only the individual's legal name and proof of vaccination is included on the BC Vaccine Card or attached to the QR code record. There is no other personal health information included on the BC Vaccine Card.

At the business level, the data from the Vaccine Card is kept by the customer. No data is collected by the business unless the business gets express consent to save it, for the benefit of the customer's future visits. If you choose to visually inspect the Vaccine card, your staff are not even touching the proof of vaccination. No information is being kept.

If you choose to use the Vaccine Verifier App, it only reads the QR code. It 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 Privacy Commissioner was engaged during the development of the BC Vaccine Verifier and the digital BC Vaccine Card and has determined that the customer's privacy is adequately maintained.

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## 20. I am a private club and I want to record my customer's vaccination status, can I do that?

Yes – you can offer to save a club member's vaccination status BUT you must get their written approval. You will need to ensure the customer understands that they are providing consent to have their 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.

Please keep the approval and the vaccination status only as long as the requirement for checking is in place. **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

**Note:** Consent to record vaccine status is best used for businesses that have a pre-existing account-based entry system (e.g., recreation centres, gyms).

## 21. Are there fines for not complying with this order?

Fines can be issued for violations of the Public Health Orders issued under the authority of the Public Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. Depending on the violation, the fine amount for individuals is \$230 or \$575, and \$2,300 for event organizers or owners/operators of locations.

Violation tickets can be issued by:

- o Police officers
- o Community safety unit
- o Liquor and cannabis inspectors
- o Gaming investigators
- o Conservation officers

More information on violation tickets can be found at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/violation-tickets>

## 22. Can a customer get a fine for refusing to provide proof of vaccination status or for harassing my staff?

Customers can be subject to a \$230 violation ticket if they:

- Engage in abusive behaviour towards a restaurant or bar employee in relation to the PHO orders
- Fail to comply with the patron conditions set out in the Food and Liquor Serving Premises Order
  - o Review the [PHO Order – Food and Liquor Serving Premises \(PDF\)](#)

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## **23. Can employees be fined for failing to check someone's proof of vaccination?**

No. The responsibility of implementing the Vaccine Card Program falls to owners/organizers. Business fines start at \$2300.

## **24. What help is being provided to support businesses navigating these new rules?**

A package of materials that includes a FAQ, posters and visual guides are available on [gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses](http://gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard-businesses).

The tools on the website will be updated as necessary so you can check back for new information.

## **25. How should staff deal with confrontational non-vaccinated guests?**

A business must refuse service to people who are not abiding by the provincial health order requiring the checking of vaccine cards.

**FIRST STEP:** The best solution is to offer a guest who does not want to provide proof of vaccination status the option of getting take out or delivery. Take out or delivery are reasonable accommodations that can be offered to any guest.

**STEP TWO:** If a customer is being belligerent or if any employee feels unable to respond to the guest with confidence, they should avoid confrontation and call a manager. We recommend that staff do not deal with difficult customers on their own.

**STEP THREE:** If it is apparent that the customer is out of line or is acting in a threatening way, please call 911. Abuse toward people trying to enforce this order will not be tolerated.

We are working on providing suggestions for conversations with difficult customers under a separate document.

## **26. 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.

## **27. Can someone wait inside to pick up takeout?**

We encourage businesses to ask customers to wait outside when picking up a takeout order that is not ready.

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

The number for the call line to assist businesses will be provided on September 13. Before that, please call our BCRFA team at 604.669.2239 and we will work with you to find answers to your questions.

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## 29. Are masks still required even though proof of vaccine 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

## 30. Are staff required to be vaccinated under this Public Health Order?

No. Restaurant and foodservice staff are not required to be vaccinated under this order. This order pertains to guests only. However, if your staff visit another food and beverage premises for a reason other than work, they will be required to provide proof of vaccination to be a guest in a restaurant or foodservice outlet.

If staff choose to stay after their shift for meal or a beverage, or arrive early for the same, they become a customer and must provide their proof of vaccination. Staff are only allowed access during their scheduled shift – and must leave after their shift, unless they provide proof of vaccination.

Employees are required to follow COVID-19 Safety practices including regular hand washing, sanitizing, maintaining distance from staff and guests where possible and, most importantly, wearing a mask. These practices have served us well the last 18 months.

Employees are covered under the Employment Standards Act and WorkSafe BC. If there are concerns about your staff being exposed to COVID-19, please call WorkSafe BC for guidance.

Restaurants can choose to have vaccination be a requirement for new employees. It is more complicated to change the requirement for an existing employee to be vaccinated. We are seeking additional guidance on this matter and will provide more information as we have it.



This document was created on September 10, 2021.

As the Vaccine Card program is still being rolled out, we anticipate that there will be updates. We will make changes and change the date at the bottom for ease of use.