



OWHA COVID-19 UPDATE

February 2, 2022

We write to inform you of certain materials regarding vaccination requirements that were provided to us today by the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Culture, Sport and Tourism Industries. **The material is set out in italics below.**

We remind you that all OWHA requirements remain in place as per our recent bulletin and we will continue to update information as changes are made and/or when new information comes available. In addition, individual PHUs, municipalities and facilities may have more restrictive requirements in place.

We note:

- (a) the Proof of Vaccination requirements that mandate QR Codes for proof of vaccination;
- (b) that approved exemptions for medical reasons require a QR code to be accepted; and
- (c) that the only two exclusions to the use of mandatory enhanced vaccine certificates are very specific; these are noted under “Exclusions to the use of mandatory enhanced vaccine certificates”.

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We also draw your attention to updated information at the following link, “What to do if you’ve been exposed to COVID-19”:

If you think you may have COVID-19 or were exposed to the virus, follow these steps to take care of yourself and protect others.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/exposed>

The following material that is in italics is today’s update from the Ministry:

The government is easing public health measures, effective January 31, 2022. Full details regarding these changes are now available: [O. Reg. 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step](#). Please share this information with your network as needed.

To protect Ontario's progress in the fight against COVID-19 the government is taking further actions, including:

- [rapidly accelerating its booster dose rollout](#)
- [applying additional public health measures, and enhancing proof of vaccination requirements.](#)

At this time, I am pleased to share updated guidance for the Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination program.

Mandatory proof of vaccination requirements

Proof of vaccination requirements at select [businesses and organizations](#) continue to apply beyond January 31, 2022. Review [O. Reg. 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step](#) to determine if your business requires mandatory proof of vaccination for patrons to enter.

[Effective January 4, 2022](#), it is mandatory to use the **enhanced vaccine certificate with QR code** to gain access to settings that require proof of vaccination.

Individuals can download their enhanced certificate by visiting <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/get-proof> and can present a digital or printed paper copy of their QR code. Individuals will continue to need to show identification that matches their name and date of birth to their certificate.

In addition, businesses are also required to verify the certificate using the free [Verify Ontario app](#). Note that businesses and organizations no longer need to collect information for case and contact management.

Exclusions to the use of mandatory enhanced vaccine certificates

There are two exclusions to the use of mandatory enhanced vaccination certificates in Ontario:

- Nine First Nations communities, and
- International visitors to Ontario who do not have a scannable QR code.

Community Members of nine First Nations can continue to use their original paper or electronic proof of vaccination along with identification where proof of vaccination is required. This exclusion reflects the Province's commitment to respecting Indigenous data sovereignty and decisions made by these communities.

Visitors to Ontario from outside of Canada who do not have a QR code that can be scanned by the Verify Ontario app must show their international vaccine receipts for visual verification of their proof of vaccination along with a valid non-Canadian passport or valid NEXUS card as ID.

Businesses and organizations should visually confirm:

- That the first name, last name and date of birth of the person on the vaccination documentation matches the non-Canadian passport or valid NEXUS card provided; and
- That their vaccine documentation meets the definition of fully vaccinated and at least 14 days have elapsed since receiving the second dose of vaccine.

Please note that this is an interim measure until visitors from outside of Canada can be assigned a temporary traveller's QR code via the Federal government upon their entry to Canada.

Please refer to the [Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#) (PDF) for more information.

Enhancing proof of medical exemptions

Ontario started a [new process](#) to provide an enhanced COVID-19 vaccine certificate with QR code for individuals who have an eligible medical exemption or who are participating in an active Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial. This new process will help combat fraud, offer greater protection of personal health information, and ease burden on businesses.

As of January 10, 2022, organizations and businesses can no longer accept physician notes or documentation stating an individual has a vaccine medical exemption or is a participant in an active clinical trial as valid exemptions for entry.

The Verify Ontario app has been updated to read and assess their exemption and will return the same green, yellow or red screen that you see when scanning regular vaccine certificates with QR codes.

Medical exemptions issued outside of Ontario are not eligible for an enhanced vaccine certificate. Individuals are recommended to see an Ontario physician or registered nurse in the extended class to have their exemption reviewed and submitted through the Ontario process.

Updated guidance and posters

Review the [regulation](#) and [Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#) to support the implementation of the enhanced vaccine certificate with a QR code and the Verify Ontario app. **Please note that these documents are updated frequently.**

There are also updated [posters](#) for businesses and organizations to print and display.

Thank you for your support and for joining our shared commitment to work together to protect the health and well-being of Ontarians.