

Instructions issued by the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Toronto Health Unit

Pursuant to Section 2(2.1) of O. Reg. 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step

October 8, 2021 (Revised November 12, 2021)

To: All Persons Responsible for Businesses and Organizations with Indoor Areas of Facilities Used for Sports and Recreational Fitness Activities in the City of Toronto

Re: Proof of Vaccination Requirements for Persons 12 Years of Age and Older Participating in Organized Sports in Indoor Areas

COVID-19 continues to circulate in Toronto, most predominantly as the Delta variant. This variant is more than twice as transmissible as the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, and the risk of hospital and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) admission after infection is two to three times higher. In an indoor environment, transmission as a result of the Delta variant may occur quickly between an infected person and many others, especially among the unvaccinated.

As of November 8, 2021, 84.5% of individuals eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine have been fully vaccinated in the City of Toronto. Each day, this percentage continues to increase; however, there are a number of individuals who remain unvaccinated and the risk of COVID-19 transmission among this population is very high.

Sports activities, by their very nature and particularly while indoors, increase close contact with other participants. Heavy breathing without masks may expose individuals to aerosols and droplets, and can result in prolonged exposure in indoor spaces, especially when ventilation is not optimized. These are all factors that elevate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Toronto Public Health has investigated many cases and outbreaks of COVID-19 related to organized sports since the start of the pandemic. Promoting and verifying proof of vaccination for all participants eligible for vaccination, including coaches and volunteers, are important steps to mitigating these risks.

The COVID-19 vaccine is the most important public health measure available and has been conclusively shown to reduce virus transmission, protect against severe consequences of COVID-19, and be highly effective with few contraindications and side effects. It is therefore critical that all persons responsible for businesses and organizations participating in organized sports and recreational fitness with indoor facilities take every measure to promote vaccination and prevent COVID-19 transmission.

Letter of Instruction

Building on current COVID-19 epidemiological trends and the evidence regarding COVID-19 transmission risks while indoors, I am issuing this Letter of Instruction to persons responsible for businesses and organizations with indoor areas of facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities within the City of Toronto. Where this Letter of Instruction imposes an additional requirement not set out in the *Reopening Ontario Act*, the requirement under this Letter of Instruction must be followed.

These instructions are being provided pursuant to Section 2(2.1) of Schedule 1 to [Ontario Regulation 364/20](#): Rules for Areas at Step 3 And At The Roadmap Exit Step made under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*, S.O. 2020, c. 17 (the “*Reopening Ontario Act*”). The Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Province of Ontario has been consulted in the development of these instructions.

Instructions

Effective 12:01 a.m. on November 1, 2021, and until further notice, I am instructing all persons responsible for businesses and organizations with indoor areas of facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities, including facility operators and permit holders, in the City of Toronto to:

1. Implement a policy requiring that each person, 12 years and older, who attends an indoor area of the facility for the purpose of:
 - a. actively participating in Organized Sports; or
 - b. coaching, caregiving at, volunteering at, or officiating Organized Sports, provide, at the point of entry, identification and proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or a valid medical exemption each time they enter.
2. Effective January 1, 2022, the policy shall provide that all children have a grace period of 12 weeks from their 12th birthday during which they must provide identification at the point of entry, but do not need to provide proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This is to allow a reasonable opportunity for vaccination to be completed.
3. Otherwise comply, and implement the above instructions, in accordance with all applicable requirements under the *Reopening Ontario Act*, including the Proof of Vaccination requirements in section 2.1 of Schedule 1, and the [Ministry of Health's Proof of Vaccination Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#).

Definitions

For the purpose of these instructions:

“**Fully Vaccinated**” means a person has received the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or as defined in subsection 2.1(5), Schedule 1 of [Ontario](#)

[Regulation 364/20.](#)

“**Organized Sport(s)**” includes but is not limited to, sports leagues, organized pick-up sports, dance classes, gymnastics, martial arts and swimming classes, or as otherwise described in the [Ministry of Health’s Proof of Vaccination Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#) under the *Reopening Ontario Act*, but does not include the sports leagues and associations identified in Table 1 and Table 2 under subsection 4(4), Schedule 1 of Ontario Regulation 364/20.

Enforcement

Please be reminded that you are required to comply with the additional measures above pursuant to regulations under the *Reopening Ontario Act* including any successor legislation or regulations.

Inquiries about these Instructions should be directed to: 416-338-7600.

Toronto Public Health posts information regarding how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 on its website that can assist local businesses and organizations in operating safely: www.toronto.ca/COVID19.

These additional measures are intended to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 where collective efforts of various sectors, including sports and recreation facilities, are required to protect our communities.

Yours truly,



Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health
City of Toronto