

COVID-19 Protocol for Proof of Full Vaccination for Events and Activities

October 4, 2021

1.0 Overview

The purpose of this protocol is to provide a layer of protection as Nova Scotia enters the fourth wave of COVID-19 and Phase 5 of its reopening plan. As gathering limits and other requirements are lifted in Phase 5, this protocol allows our businesses, schools and communities to remain fully open by requiring participants in certain events and activities to be fully vaccinated.

Everyone in Nova Scotia will continue to have access to essential, non-discretionary services such as groceries, pharmacies, health care and more. Proof of full vaccination is not required to access essential services.

This protocol is effective October 4, 2021. It focuses on events and activities where people gather together and that are considered discretionary and non-essential. It applies to people who are 12 and older. Children who are 11 and younger and therefore unable to be vaccinated can attend events and activities with a fully vaccinated adult or on their own if feasible. There are grace periods for youth 12 and older to get vaccinated and there are exceptions for a limited number of circumstances.

Vaccination is the best defense against COVID-19. There are very few medical reasons that prevent vaccination. Everyone who can get vaccinated should do so. Anyone who needs to get vaccinated can book an appointment in Nova Scotia. There is no fee. More information is available at novascotia.ca/coronavirus.

NOTE: To date, most COVID-19 vaccines have been referred to by their manufacturers' names. Recently, manufacturers released brand names for their vaccines. Moderna manufactures Spikevax. Pfizer-BioNTech manufactures Comirnaty. AstraZeneca manufactures Vaxzevria and COVIDSHIELD. Throughout this protocol, the manufacturer names continue to be used because they are most familiar to Nova Scotians.

2.0 Proof of full vaccination

2.1 Definition of full vaccination

A person is considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in Nova Scotia in the following circumstances:

- 14 days or more after receiving the second dose of a two-dose series of a Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca) following minimum dosing intervals. This includes a mix of these vaccines, such as one dose of AstraZeneca and one dose of Moderna.
- 14 days or more after receiving a one-dose series of a Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccine (Janssen/Johnson & Johnson).
- 14 days or more after receiving the final dose of any other World Health Organization authorized series of COVID-19 vaccine (such as Sinopharm or Sinovac).

People who received vaccine in another country that is not authorized by the World Health Organization can [book appointments](#) in Nova Scotia to get two doses of Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech or a combination of these two vaccines to achieve full vaccination 14 days after the second dose.

The day a person got their second/final dose of vaccine is considered day 1. They are considered fully vaccinated 14 days after. In other words, they can participate in an event or activity covered by Section 3.1 of this protocol on the 15th day or later as long as they show their proof of full vaccination.

Testing, wearing a mask or other personal protective equipment, maintaining physical distance, or using a gathering limit or other mitigation measures are all important public health measures but they cannot replace the requirement of providing proof of full vaccination for events and activities outlined in Section 3.1 of this protocol. Any public health measures that are in effect must be followed, in addition to this protocol.

2.2 Acceptable forms of proof of full vaccination

Original proof of full vaccination records are acceptable in paper and digital formats, as well as clear photos, screenshots and photocopies.

Required information

At minimum, a record must show all the following information to demonstrate proof of full vaccination:

- the person's name
- the brand(s) of vaccine received (such as Moderna, Pfizer, etc)
- an indication that all required doses for that brand of vaccine were received
- the date when the final dose was received

For example:

Jane Doe
COVID-19 Dose 1
Pfizer-BioNTech
Received on May 14, 2021

COVID-19 Dose 2
Pfizer-BioNTech
Received on July 9, 2021

Preferred format of proof of full vaccination

The federal government has developed a standard proof of vaccination for Canadians. It allows all provinces and territories to have a standard, recognizable proof of vaccination. Effective October 1, 2021, Nova Scotia is adopting it as the province's standard format for proof of vaccination:



Everyone who is vaccinated in Nova Scotia on or after October 1, 2021 will receive their proof of vaccination in this standard format. Everyone who was vaccinated in Nova Scotia before that date is encouraged to [download](#) their proof of vaccination in this new format, starting October 1. This will make it easier for businesses and organizations in Nova Scotia to check proof of vaccination.

People who were vaccinated outside Nova Scotia or outside Canada can use the proof of vaccination they received in another jurisdiction. If they wish, starting October 4, they can follow [instructions](#) to upload their vaccine record from the jurisdiction(s) where they were vaccinated in order to receive their proof of vaccination in Nova Scotia's standard format. It will take several weeks to receive it because the information submitted must be verified.

This standard proof of vaccination has a quick response (QR) code that can be scanned by a business or organization that requires a person’s proof of full vaccination. Nova Scotia will implement VaxCheckNS starting October 22. It is a QR scanner app to scan this code and provide a simple green “confirmed” response or a red “sorry” response.

Once it is launched, scanning the new standard proof of vaccination with VaxCheckNS will be the preferred method of providing and checking proof of full vaccination. People are encouraged to use this process to make providing and checking proof of full vaccination easier for everyone. It will also best protect people’s personal health information regarding their vaccination status. (See more in Section 2.4.)

Other acceptable formats of proof of full vaccination

Other options will be acceptable as proof of vaccination both before and after VaxCheckNS is available.

People who were vaccinated in Canada can use the standard proof of vaccination (shown above), whether or not the QR code it contains is scanned. It provides all the information required under this protocol. It is acceptable as proof of vaccination within Nova Scotia, whether it is printed or photocopied or in digital form (such as a PDF or screenshot image saved on your phone or in the CanImmunize app).

People who were vaccinated in Nova Scotia before October 4 had access to the original format of the Nova Scotia COVID-19 vaccine record. A wallet-sized version of this record was also available – it can be laminated but does not have to be. It provides all the information required under this protocol. It is acceptable as proof of vaccination within Nova Scotia, whether it is printed or photocopied or in digital form (such as a PDF or screenshot image saved on your phone or in the [CanImmunize app](#)):

The image shows a digital representation of a Nova Scotia COVID-19 vaccine record card. The card is titled "Jane Doe" and includes her date of birth (March 17, 1936). It lists two doses of COVID-19 vaccine: Dose 1 (Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA, lot EL1406, received July 28, 2021) and Dose 2 (Moderna mRNA-1273, lot 300042460, received September 27, 2021). The card is powered by CANImmunize and printed on 2021-09-29. To the right, a summary of the record is shown, listing the same two doses with green checkmarks indicating they were received.

NOVA SCOTIA CANADA Powered By **CANImmunize**

Jane Doe
Date of Birth: March 17, 1936

COVID-19: Dose 1
PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 mRNA
Lot Number: EL1406
Received: 2021/07/28
Location: NS, CAN

COVID-19: Dose 2
MODERNA COVID-19 mRNA-1273
Lot Number: 300042460
Received: 2021/09/27
Location: NS, CAN

Printed on 2021-09-29

Below you can find a summary of your COVID-19 vaccination record.

Jane Doe
Date of Birth: March 17, 1936
Received Vaccinations

COVID-19
PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 mRNA
Lot Number: EL1406
Received on July 28, 2021
Dose: 1
Province of vaccination: Nova Scotia
Country of vaccination: Canada

COVID-19
MODERNA COVID-19 mRNA-1273
Lot Number: 300042460
Received on September 27, 2021
Dose: 2
Province of vaccination: Nova Scotia
Country of vaccination: Canada

People who received one or more doses of vaccine in another province, territory or country may show the proof of vaccination they received from that jurisdiction. Some people may need to show proof of vaccination from more than one jurisdiction if they got doses in different places. These records must provide the required information outlined in Section 2.2 of this protocol.

Getting your Nova Scotia COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination

The Nova Scotia COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination can be accessed [online](#) or by phone.

To access your record online, you will need your health card number and the email address or phone number you provided when you booked your vaccination appointments.

If you enter your email address, you will receive an email from noreply@canimmunize.ca with instructions to log in and access your record. If you enter your phone number, you will be sent a verification code used to access your record through your browser.

If you are unable to access your record online, you can call toll-free at 1-833-797-7772. An operator can issue your record by email or by mail.

2.3 Valid ID

In some cases, valid ID will be required along with proof of full vaccination to verify that a person is providing their own proof of vaccination.

In cases where a person's identity is already known (i.e. where they have an existing membership such as gyms or they are already registered as participants in an activity such as recreation programs), valid ID is not required.

In cases where the person does not already have this kind of relationship with the business or organization, such as bars and restaurants, many leisure activities, and new members and participants, valid ID will be required along with proof of vaccination.

Acceptable forms of valid ID include:

- drivers license
- passport
- government issued ID card
- health card
- birth certificate
- student card
- Secure Certificate of Indian Status

Original ID records are acceptable in card, paper and digital formats, as well as clear photos, screenshots and photocopies.

2.4 Checking proof of full vaccination

Businesses and organizations hosting events and activities that are covered in Section 3.1 of this protocol are responsible to check that participants are fully vaccinated before they engage in the event or activity.

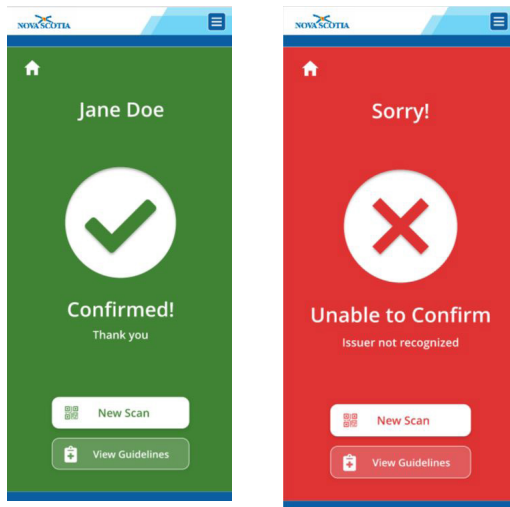
People are allowed to enter a lobby area in order to provide their proof of full vaccination but not allowed further into a business or facility until they have provided their proof. If there are other businesses or organizations where proof of vaccination is not required that share the lobby space, people can go through the lobby to access them.

People who have the new standard proof of full vaccination for Nova Scotia or another Canadian province or territory can show a paper or digital version. The business or organization can scan the QR code. They can also look at the paper or digital version to review required information outlined in Section 2.2 of this protocol.

Currently, the person scanning the code will see the all the details on the proof of vaccination from the province or territory where the person was vaccinated.

Starting October 22, Nova Scotia will implement VaxCheckNS, a unique QR code scanner app that businesses and organizations can use on a smartphone or other device to scan a paper or digital version of person's proof of vaccination. VaxCheckNS will be available as free download in the App Store for Apple devices and Google Play for other devices.

If the proof of vaccination was provided by a Canadian province or territory, VaxCheckNS will produce a green “confirmed” response or a red “sorry” response instead of showing the entire vaccine record. If the person chooses, they can fold a paper version or adjust the display on their phone such that only the QR code is visible to the person who is scanning. This protects their full vaccine record from being seen by anyone.



Businesses and organizations are not required to use VaxCheckNS. However, it is strongly recommended as a fast method of checking proof of full vaccination that also best protects personal health information. Other QR code scanners are not recommended because they reveal all the details on the person’s proof of full vaccination.

In cases where a person does not present the standard proof of vaccination outlined above or the business or organization chooses not to use VaxCheckNS, the business or organization will need to review the details on the person’s proof of vaccination to check for the required information as outlined in Section 2.2 of this protocol. They may also need to check the person’s ID as outlined in Section 2.3 of this protocol.

The business or organization needs to ensure the person received their final dose of an acceptable COVID-19 vaccine (as outlined in Section 2.1 of this protocol) at least 14 days earlier than the day of the event or activity. For example, if the event or activity is on October 30, the person would only be considered fully vaccinated if they received their final dose of an acceptable vaccine on October 16 or earlier.

Privacy

Nova Scotia's Personal Health Information Act prevents businesses and organizations from keeping records about people's health unless they provide consent. While businesses and organizations need to review proof of vaccination, they cannot keep copies of this private health information without the person's consent. They cannot keep a paper or electronic list of people who have or have not shown their proof of vaccination without their consent. [Consent is recommended to be in writing](#) but may be obtained verbally or in writing.

Businesses and organizations are allowed to create their own solutions for checking proof of vaccination as long as they respect privacy requirements. In some cases, they will need to require proof of vaccination every time a person accesses their events or activities. In other cases where a system that respects privacy requirements can be implemented, full proof of vaccination may only need to be shown once.

Responsibility in shared spaces

Some businesses and organizations that host events and activities covered under Section 3.1 of this protocol rent or use space within a building. In these cases, there is a joint responsibility between the business or organization and the building owner/manager. The building owner/manager needs to ensure renters and users of their spaces have proper processes in place for checking proof of full vaccination for participants in these events and activities. They can accomplish this through their rental agreement.

In cases where the renter or user of the owner/manager is not willing or capable of implementing a proper process for checking participants' proof of full vaccination, the owner/manager will be held responsible if there is demonstrated non-compliance with this protocol. If the owner/manager does not wish to take on the responsibility, they should not rent the space or make it available for the event or activity. The owner/manager cannot have the renter or user of the space sign a waiver absolving them of the responsibility.

If a business or organization that does not host events and activities covered under Section 3.1 of this protocol rents or uses a space in a building, they continue to be exempt from requiring proof of vaccination, even if events or activities in other parts of the building require it.

3.0 Where the proof of full vaccination requirement applies

3.1 Proof of full vaccination is required

People need proof of full vaccination to go to or participate in discretionary, non-essential events, activities and services that gather people together, including but not limited to:

- full-service restaurants where patrons sit at tables to be served, both indoors and on patios
- food establishments (such as fast food and coffee shops) where people sit to eat/drink, both indoors and on patios (not including takeout, drive-thru or delivery)
- liquor licensed (drinking) establishments (like bars, wineries, distillery tasting rooms, craft taprooms and liquor manufacturers)
- casinos and gaming establishments, both indoors and on patios
- fitness establishments (like gyms and yoga studios) and sport and recreation facilities (like arenas, pools and large multipurpose recreation facilities)
- businesses and organizations offering indoor and outdoor recreation and leisure activities (like climbing facilities, dance classes, escape rooms, go-carts, indoor arcades, indoor play spaces, music lessons, pottery painting, shooting ranges and outdoor adventure)
- indoor and outdoor festivals, special events and arts and culture events and activities (like theatre performances, concerts and movie theatres), unless they are outdoor events held in a public space with no specific entry point (like Nocturne)
- indoor and outdoor sports practices, games, competitions and tournaments (participants and spectators)
- indoor and outdoor extracurricular school-based activities, including sports
- bus, boat and walking tours
- museums, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, and public library programs

- indoor and outdoor events and activities like receptions, social events and conferences that are hosted by a business or organization
- indoor and outdoor wedding ceremonies and funerals (including receptions and visitation) that are hosted by a business or organization
- community meetings in rental spaces and/or where the public may be present, such as annual general meetings of businesses or organizations
- training hosted by a recognized business or organization (such as driver training or courses offered by a training business) and/or using a rental space

3.2 Proof of full vaccination is not required

Proof of full vaccination is not required for most places that don't host formal gatherings and that offer essential, non-discretionary services and activities. Some examples include:

- retail stores
- financial institutions
- professional services like accountants and lawyers
- personal services like hair salons, barber shops, spas, nail salons and body art establishments
- healthcare services and health professions like doctor's offices, dental care, massage therapy and physiotherapy
- rental accommodations like hotel rooms, cottages and campgrounds
- regular faith services (such as daily or weekly)
- pre-primary to Grade 12 school-based activities and field trips that take place during the school day (unless a field trip is for an event or activity where proof of full vaccination is required), before and after school programs and school buses
- post-secondary institutions (universities, NSCC, private career colleges, language schools) unless they are hosting events or activities that the general public attend

- business meetings and other activities in the workplace when they involve people who regularly work together and where the general public is not present (unless it's in a rental space)
- legislatively required meetings where public participation cannot be done virtually (such as municipal council meetings where citizens have a democratic right to participate)
- places where government services are offered, such as Access Nova Scotia centres
- mental health and addictions support groups
- food banks, shelters, family resource centres and adult day programs for seniors and people with disabilities
- informal gatherings at a private residence (gathering limit of 15 indoors and 50 outdoors)
- general access to public libraries (such as borrowing books, using computers)
- public transportation

3.3 Employees and volunteers

Proof of full vaccination is not required for full-time or part-time staff of businesses and organizations that host events and activities covered by Section 3.1 of this protocol.

However, if an employee accesses the event or activity on their own time, this protocol applies to them. For example, a staff member at a gym does not need to provide proof of full vaccination to work but does need to provide it to use the facility personally, such as attending fitness classes or using the weight room for their own workout.

Proof of full vaccination is not required under this protocol if your job requires you to access a business or organization that hosts an event or activity covered by this protocol (such as a liquor inspector, delivery person, public health officer, police officer, contractor). It is not required for service providers at an event or activity, such as caterers, photographers and DJs, because they are effectively in their workplace.

Proof of full vaccination is required for volunteers who host, lead or organize the events and activities covered by Section 3.1 of this protocol. Some examples include people who organize community events and programs, lead or organize club type activities, and coaches, referees and other officials who volunteer with sports activities.

Children and youth who are volunteers for events and activities covered by Section 3.1 of this protocol have the same grace period to get vaccinated as children and youth who are participants, as outlined in Section 3.4.

Any business or organization may choose to implement its own vaccine policy for staff and volunteers (see Section 4.0).

3.4 Children and youth

Children can participate in events and activities covered in Section 3.1 of this protocol (even if their parents are not fully vaccinated) if they meet one of the following conditions:

- they are 12 or older and are fully vaccinated as outlined in Section 2.1 of this protocol
- they are 11 or under and therefore unable to be vaccinated
- they meet the criteria in one of the grace periods outlined below

Parents who are not fully vaccinated would have to either drop off their children for these activities (if that is possible) or have a fully vaccinated adult accompany them (if adult supervision is required or preferred).

Children who turned 12 between January 1 and October 4, 2021 have until December 31, 2021 to attend events and activities while they get vaccinated. Children who turn 12 after October 4, 2021 have 3 months from their birthday to get vaccinated.

Youth who are 13 to 18 and have proof that they received 1 dose of COVID-19 vaccine can participate in sport, recreation, arts and culture programming hosted by a business or organization as of October 4. To continue participating, they must provide proof of full vaccination by November 9, 2021. In order to be fully vaccinated by November 9, a person needs to get a first dose no later than September 28 and a second dose no later than October 26.

If youth choose not to get vaccinated by the time these grace periods end, they will no longer be able to participate until they can provide proof of full vaccination.

3.5 Exceptions

Medical exceptions

People with a valid medical reason that prevents them from getting vaccinated can request an exception from the requirement to show proof of full vaccination for events and activities covered by Section 3.1 of this protocol. Medical exceptions will only be granted in the following circumstances:

- a history of severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) after previous administration of a COVID-19 vaccine using a similar platform (mRNA or viral vector)
- an allergy to any component of the specific COVID-19 vaccine or its container (polyethylene glycol for the Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna vaccines)
- a history of major venous and/or arterial thrombosis with thrombocytopenia following vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine
- a history of capillary leak syndrome following vaccination with the AstraZeneca vaccine
- a history of myocarditis and/or pericarditis after a first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna)
- experienced a serious adverse event after receiving a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. A serious adverse event is defined as life-threatening, requires in-patient hospitalization or prolongs an existing hospitalization, results in persistent or significant disability/incapacity, or in a congenital anomaly/birth defect.

People must ask a physician or nurse practitioner to complete and sign a Valid Medical Contraindication for COVID-19 Vaccination letter attesting that they have a valid medical reason that prevents vaccination. Physicians and nurse practitioners have a template of this letter to complete. The letter will include:

- The Nova Scotia logo with the Department of Health and Wellness identifier
- The patient's name three times throughout the document
- The physician or nurse practitioner's signature and the date
- The physician or nurse practitioner's name printed along with their credentials and the date

Anyone with a medical exception needs to present this letter and valid ID in place of proof of full vaccination for events and activities covered by Section 3.1 of this protocol.

Participants in clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccines

A small number of Nova Scotians are participating in clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccines that are not yet approved by Health Canada or the World Health Organization. They are not required to show proof of full vaccination for events and activities covered by Section 3.1 of this protocol.

Participants in these trials do not need to request this exception. The Canadian Centre for Vaccinology has been authorized by the Department of Health and Wellness to send exception letters directly to these participants. The letter will include:

- The Nova Scotia logo with the Department of Health and Wellness identifier
- The participant's name two times throughout the document
- The name of the clinical trial
- Signature of Dr. Robert Strang, chief medical officer of Health for Nova Scotia and the date
- Signature of the lead researcher(s) for the clinical trial in which the person participated and the date

Anyone with an exception because they are in a clinical trial needs to present this letter and valid ID in place of proof of full vaccination for events and activities covered by Section 3.1 of this protocol.

4.0 Business and organization vaccine policies

A business or organization that hosts events and activities covered in Section 3.1 of this protocol may choose to implement its own vaccination policy for employees, volunteers and customers, members or clients. Any policies they create cannot be less stringent than this protocol.

Many businesses and organizations are not subject to this protocol. Some examples are given in Section 3.2. They can also set their own vaccination policies for employees, volunteers and customers, members or clients.

All vaccination policies need to take legal and ethical implications into consideration. People who are not fully vaccinated need to be able to access essential, non-discretionary services such as grocery stores, pharmacies, health care services and more.

5.0 Compliance

5.1 Inspection of events and activities

Provincial inspectors will conduct compliance checks at events and activities covered in Section 3.1 of this protocol. Some may be coupled with regular inspections, such as food safety. Some may be based on complaints. Not every event and activity will be inspected.

Inspectors will ensure the business or organization has a system in place to only allow people who are either age 11 or under or have provided proof of full vaccination to participate. They will also check for compliance with other aspects of the Health Protection Act Order that may apply.

Any compliance action will take into consideration the risk to public health and the willingness of the business or organization to comply with this protocol. If aspects of non-compliance are noted, enforcement will take a measured approach with the use of a range of available options to ensure compliance with this protocol (e.g. education, ticketing, etc.).

If necessary, enforcement action could include fines of \$2,422.50 per individual or \$11,622.50 per corporation. It could include closure of the business or organization hosting the event or activity until they comply.

5.2 Compliance by patrons

Businesses and organizations may have many patrons who are willing to comply with this proof of full vaccination protocol. They may face opposition from some.

It will be important for businesses and organizations to remind patrons that the proof of vaccination requirement is the law in Nova Scotia under the Health Protection Act Order issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health to protect people during the ongoing pandemic.

People who wish to access events and activities covered in Section 3.1 of this protocol are required by law to show their proof of full vaccination. Businesses and organizations are required check for it and deny entry to those who cannot provide it.

It is an offence to knowingly provide false or misleading information, either orally or in writing, under the Nova Scotia Health Protection Act which could result in a fine of \$2,422.50 per occurrence. Businesses and organizations can call their local police should they need assistance (i.e. to help manage people who are causing disturbances).

[Skills Online NS](#) offers free online training course that may help businesses and organizations manage challenging situations with patrons. A recommended bundle of courses includes:

- Working in a Challenging Time
- Specialities: Customer Service
- Bullying and Violence in the Workplace

6.0 Resources

[Proof of full vaccination required signage](#)

[Consent form for recording vaccination status \(see Appendix B\)](#)

[How to access Nova Scotia COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination](#)

[Guide for participants at events and activities requiring proof of full vaccination](#)

[Guide for businesses and organizations to check proof of full vaccination](#)

[Skills Online NS](#)

[Nova Scotia coronavirus website](#)

[Nova Scotia Health Protection Act Order](#)