

Vaccination Requirements for Visitors at Municipal Facilities

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Prepared by:	Kevin Fowke Corporate Services
Recommended by:	General Manager of Corporate Services

Report Summary

Provincial legislation requires visitors to be fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus to access indoor leisure and recreation amenities such as fitness centers, arenas and large event venues. A number of other publicly accessible, City owned facilities are not included in the Province's directives about Covid-19 vaccination. This could lead to confusion or perceptions of inconsistent treatment of visitors between municipal facilities. This report recommends that city owned meeting and community gathering facilities have a mandatory vaccination requirement for visitors.

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approves a requirement for visitors using municipal meeting rooms and community gathering facilities be fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus as a condition of using them as outlined in the report entitled "Vaccination Requirements for Visitors at Municipal Facilities" presented at the City Council Meeting on October 26, 2021.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to operational matters and has no direct connection to the Community Energy & Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

The Province of Ontario amended O. Reg 364/20 of the Reopening Ontario Act, 2020 in September of 2021 to include O. Reg. 645/21, which requires residents to provide proof of vaccination to enter certain facilities beginning September 22, 2021. In the City's service context, it clearly applies to indoor recreational areas such as arenas and fitness and leisure facilities.

The presence of the COVID-19 virus in our community led to changes to services to ensure the safety of employees and citizens. For example, while unrestricted public access into TDS and 199 Larch has changed, in-person City services have been maintained in a controlled manner. Standard requirements for face coverings, offering hand sanitization opportunities, ensuring physical barriers, physical distancing and security monitoring are in place, and are anticipated to remain in place for the foreseeable future. Systems to verify individual vaccination as a requirement for access to facilities is meant to protect progress being made limiting the spread of COVID- 9 and preserve reopening plans.

On September 15, 2021 the City of Greater Sudbury (CGS) announced a mandatory vaccination policy for all staff. The purpose of the policy is to continue to protect the health and safety of employees from the spread of COVID-19 and to meet the obligation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to take all necessary precautions to protect the health and safety of the workforce. The policy applies to members of Council and members of Council appointed committees, contractors and students. New employees will also be subject to this policy as a condition of their employment. Employees in various City operations may have additional requirements under government directives, regulations, orders and/or legislation, based on their specific roles and responsibilities. Examples include employees at Pioneer Manor and those working in Emergency Medical Services.

Under the terms of the policy all employees were required to declare their vaccination status as of September 30, 2021 and to be fully vaccinated by November 15, 2021. The consequences for failing to disclose vaccination status or obtaining full vaccination include placement on unpaid leave and the potential for discipline.

Analysis

Municipal Facilities Subject to Provincial Regulation

Many CGS Facilities that would identify as having the highest level of public interaction are currently mandated by the Provincial Regulation to provide proof of vaccination for entry. These areas are differentiated by length of visit and the likelihood of contact with others. Participants at fitness facilities, arenas and pools may be in close contact with others and also be unable to wear a mask or face covering while participating in certain activities. Furthermore, social events that take place in a community hall may include opportunities to consume food and beverages.

Indoor Recreation Facilities - Beginning Wednesday, September 22, 2021, provincial requirements call for anyone entering an indoor recreation facility (pools, arenas, fitness centres and community halls) to provide their vaccination receipt or medical exemption along with proof of identification. Acceptable proof of identification is a piece of government-issued ID that has the name and date of birth of the identification holder, for example a birth certificate, citizenship card, driver's license, health card, status card, passport or permanent residence card. Further details on the process for providing this information can be found online at <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/news-and-public-notice/2021/proof-of-vaccination-required-at-the-citys-indoor-recreation-facilities/>

Pioneer Manor – Visitors and essential care givers attending long term care facilities must follow Directive 3 from the Minister of Long Term Care. The Directive requires that anyone visiting a long term care home follow a number of screening and health information surveillance steps. While full vaccination is not mandatory (as the facility is a home for those families that are accessing its services), vaccination data is collected and those that are not fully vaccinated are subject to testing requirements.

As part of ongoing efforts to maximize vaccination rates in long-term care homes, the Minister of Long-Term Care revised the [Minister's Directive: Long-term care home COVID-19/covid 19 immunization policy](#) to require staff, support workers, students and volunteers to provide proof that they have received all required doses of COVID-19 vaccine, or proof of a valid medical contraindication, by November 22, 2021 in order to work, train or volunteer in a long-term care home. Any new staff, support workers, students or volunteers are required to provide this proof before they attend the home.

Access to Other Public City Facilities

A staff team lead by Corporate Security services has taken the additional step of analyzing all other public city facilities that are not already mandated to require full vaccination for access. Additional facilities identified as high level of public interaction include the Transit Terminal and Transit buses, Tom Davies Square, 199 Larch, certain Greater Sudbury Public Library Locations and smaller community gathering areas such as fieldhouses and community rooms.

Broadly, staff classified facilities according to the nature of the visitor attendance at each one, as follows:

1. Brief, transactional visits – these are locations where visitors typically make “in and out”-type visits, generally of very short duration, mostly to conduct straightforward exchange transactions.
2. Longer stay – these are locations where visitors typically stay for an extended period and the nature of the service they access generally requires more time and/or personal interaction to complete.

Locations Supporting Mostly Brief, Transactional Visits

The following locations were assessed as ones that involve brief, transactional visits:

Transit Terminal- While the Ontario regulation does not apply to municipal Transit buses or facilities, it is anticipated the extension to buses and/or transit hubs would be extremely challenging. There would be a need for the contracted Security at the Transit Terminal to support verification if implemented. Denying access to public transportation may be contrary to Human Rights guidance.

Tom Davies Square (TDS) - The majority of visitors to Tom Davies Square would be considered short term. Most attend for customer service purposes, such as making payments, picking up/dropping off documents and to attend meetings. If a vaccination policy was in place there would be a requirement for resources, such as screening staff and technology used for scanning or verification of vaccination. It is reasonable that TDS could continue to operate under existing guidelines provided by Public Health Sudbury & Districts, such as masking requirements, sanitizing, socially distancing and using appointments if required. Attendance at Provincial Offences Court will be the subject of future consideration and requires more discussion with the province. Court is currently being conducted virtually.

199 Larch – This facility is 70% occupied by Provincial ministries and agencies. The Warming/Cooling center is on the main floor of 199 Larch and began overnight operation October 4, 2021. This service will extend through April 2022.

Services available at 199 Larch include, but are not limited to; Greater Sudbury Social Services, Service Ontario, Probation and Parole, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Provincial Offences Office, Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Works, Employment Services, and Larch St. Daycare. IT staff also occupy a significant portion of the eleventh floor of the building. Many of the services may be in a position to operate by appointment only.

If a vaccination policy was in place there would be a requirement for resources, such as screening staff and technology used for scanning or verification of vaccination. There would also be an increase in contracted security needs.

Greater Sudbury Public Library Locations- Many visits to the library may be short term, when attending in order to pick up/ drop off items, or use the many services available at Library branches. It would be considered reasonable that they could continue to follow public health measures such as masking and social distancing in place of a vaccination policy. Some of the same practical limitations like carrying identification indicated for transit riders exist for library patrons as well. Library staff would require assistance if they were to be expected to enforce a full vaccination requirement. The Greater Sudbury Public Library Board continues to oversee the service and will consider advice from health and safety, corporate security and Public Health Sudbury & Districts.

Frobisher Waste Management – visitors attending Frobisher are short term. It should be considered that public health measures can continue to be followed. There may also be a possibility to offer curbside or outdoor pick up for some services.

Facilities that have been identified as low level of public interaction include; 1160 Lorne, Anderson Farm (when open), museums (when open), depots, Water/Wastewater and the Civic Memorial Cemetery. The Mausoleum portion of the cemetery is mandated under the provincial regulation for vaccination exemptions for people entering the indoor premise for purposes of attending a service.

Locations Supporting Longer Stay visits

Lionel E. Lalonde and Frobisher Waste Management have been identified as facilities where longer stay visits typically occur:

Lionel E. Lalonde- A large portion of this facility is occupied by Greater Sudbury Police Service and the Collision Reporting Centre. Greater Sudbury Police Service has implemented a mandatory vaccination policy for all employees requiring full vaccination by October 18, 2021. They do not currently have a visitor vaccination policy in place but will continue to follow public health and screening measures. The fitness centre, gymnasium and cafeteria are currently mandated by the O.Reg to require proof of vaccination for entry or use. The classroom and training areas are often used by other Ministries or groups who rent the space for the purpose of training and education, and therefore their use would include an extended timeframe. Consideration should be made for a vaccination policy included in the rental or usage agreement when groups will be using the facility for this purpose.

Community Rooms and Community Gathering Spaces - Further considerations were given to the fieldhouses in Leisure. As well as building owned by CGS but currently being leased, such as Minnow Lake Place, various Lions Clubs, Family Health Team Medical Clinics. City of Greater Sudbury Staff are not employed at these locations. These locations however tend to involve longer term visits and interactions that are similar to meeting rooms wherein a group may spend several hours together, have difficulty maintaining adequate physical distancing or remove masks to consumer food or beverages. Consideration should be made for a vaccination policy included in the rental or usage agreement when groups will be using the facility for this purpose.

Based on the potential for visits of longer duration, instances of close contact and the consumption of food and beverages requiring the removal of masks sharing of food and other meeting materials, staff recommend the requirement of full vaccination for visitors after November 15th at the following locations:

- Lionel E. Lalonde Centre
- All publicly accessible meeting and community rooms including Council Chambers
- Community Halls

Staff will work with user groups ensure that this requirement is reflected in rental or usage agreements. These additional steps will take resources and time. If it is not possible to have groups verify their own full vaccination status, staff will need to be trained and resourced to provide vaccine verification at the entranceway to these facilities or prior to a facility being used by a group or individual. The introduction of a Provincial standard for vaccine verification is imminent at the time of writing this report and it is hoped that technology can be deployed that will increase the efficiency and security of vaccination data collection.

Communications and Community Engagement will continue to work with Public Health Sudbury and Districts to share and amplify the most accurate and up-to-date information for the public. Currently, the messages have a strong focus on the provincial proof of vaccination status, and on maintaining public health protocols in the face of the Delta variant of COVID-19.

Conclusion

Considering the public interaction levels, the value of consistent, continued access to government services, public health advice and current epidemiologic status in Sudbury, it is reasonable that locations providing mostly brief, transactional visits rely on continuing public health measures including masks, social distancing, hand sanitizing and physical separation. Where longer stay visits occur, it is reasonable to establish a vaccination requirement for visitors that aligns those spaces with others that are governed by provincial regulation, in addition to maintaining adherence to public health measures including masks, social distancing, sanitizing and physical separation. This would be subject to change or revision based on evolving provincial and/or Public Health guidance.

Resources Cited

Amendment 645/21 to the Reopening Act:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r21645>