

VaxDC: Vaccination Entry Requirement for Certain Businesses – Guidance and FAQ

Beginning January 15, 2022, specific DC public businesses will require all patrons aged 12 years old or older to show proof that they have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine before they are allowed entry (two doses will be required starting Feb 15th). Establishments must visibly display signage informing patrons that proof of COVID-19 vaccination is required to enter indoors. Signs for businesses can be found at vaxdc.dc.gov.

What types of businesses will be required to check vaccination status?

- **Indoor food and drink establishments, such as:**
 - Restaurants
 - Nightclubs
 - Taverns
 - Food halls/courts
 - Breweries, wineries, and distillery tasting rooms
 - Seated dining halls, restaurants, and cafes in museums, libraries, hotels, and other public venues
- **Indoor cultural and entertainment establishments, such as:**
 - Concert, live entertainment venues
 - Sporting venues
 - Movie theaters
 - Pool and billiard halls
 - Bowling alleys
 - Cigar bars
 - Hookah bars
 - Adult entertainment venues
- **Indoor exercise and recreational facilities, such as:**
 - Gyms
 - Fitness Studios
- **Indoor event and meeting establishments, such as:**
 - Hotel meeting rooms
 - Banquet halls
 - Conference center meeting facilities
 - Event/banquet halls in museums and libraries
 - Convention centers
 - Auditoriums
 - Shared work facilities when hosting events
- **Any other indoor establishment designated by the Director of the DC Department of Health**

Exemptions for providing proof of vaccination

- Only briefly entering (i.e. to use the restroom, pick up an order to go)
- Medically exempt or unable to take the vaccine out of a sincerely held religious belief.
 - **Patrons who have and show documentation of medical or religious exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccine must provide a negative PCR or antigen test within the last 24 hours.**

- **Documentation of a medical exemption, such as a note from a medical provider.**
- **Documentation of a religious exemption, such as an attestation from the patron that they have a sincerely held religious belief.**

What are acceptable forms of proof of COVID-19 vaccination status?

- **For proof of vaccination, patrons ages 12 years and older must provide:**
 - A CDC issued vaccination card (original, photocopy, or digital copy/photo)
 - Record of immunization from a healthcare provider or public health authority
 - A COVID-19 verification app (e.g., VaxYes, Clear, Excelsior, MyIR)
 - World Health Organization Vaccination Record

What are acceptable forms of photo identification?

- **Businesses will also need to verify vaccination with photo identification for patrons ages 18 years and older, such as:**
 - State issued driver's license or limited purpose driver's license
 - Any other state issued identification card
 - Passport
 - DC One Card
 - Student ID
 - Permanent resident card

Can unvaccinated persons show proof of a negative test taken within 72 hours for entry to the facility for indoor service?

- No, a negative COVID-19 test alone does not qualify as an alternative to providing proof of vaccination, unless the patron has a religious or medical exemption.

Will employees need to keep a patron's record of vaccine status or a record of the verification process?

- No, they do not need to keep a record. The business will be subject to any penalties for noncompliance if it is found that it did not adhere to the proper vaccination verification process.

What will employees be expected to do with a patron not presenting a valid form of vaccination verification?

- If a patron does not present valid proof of their COVID-19 vaccination with their photo ID, they may only be seated, served, or participate in activities in an outdoor portion of the facility, if available. Persons who do not present a valid form of vaccination certification may only be granted access to the indoor area if they wear a well-fitted face covering and are only briefly entering the indoor area to: 1) get to the outdoor area or to the restroom; 2) order or pay at the register; or 3) pick up an order, whether to be consumed in an outdoor area or off-site (take out). Such patrons may not remain in the indoor area to receive service or to participate in indoor activities.

What Businesses or Organizations Do Not Have to Verify Vaccination Status for Entry?

- Retail establishments

- Grocery stores, farmer's markets, and food establishments that provide charitable food services
- Houses of worship
- Hotels, except meeting rooms, ballrooms and hotel restaurants and bars
- Homeless shelters and other human services facilities
- Health care facilities and pharmacies
- Private meeting spaces in office buildings or residential buildings
- Gyms and Fitness Facilities operating for the sole use of individuals residing or working in that specific building
- Law enforcement buildings and government offices such as the Department of Motor Vehicles

If an exempt facility conducts a non-exempt activity, the vaccine requirement shall apply.

- For example, if a house of worship is rented for a non-religious purpose, a museum hosts a gala, a public library or a retail bookstore hosts an indoor seated event, proof of vaccination would be required to enter the area where the event is being held.

What about kids under 12?

- They are not covered by the order at this time, but parents should get their children 5-11 vaccinated.

Where do we need to display the vaccination requirement signage?

- Signage, which can be downloaded at vaxdc.dc.gov, must be displayed at the entry point of the establishment, such as a door or window.

Where should businesses check for proof of vaccination?

- Businesses must check proof of vaccination at the entry point or at the first point of contact between the customer and a staff member. The safest place to execute the vaccination requirement is at the point of entry and, where possible, before the customer enters.

For customers whose vaccination status has been verified previously, are we required to repeatedly check?

- Yes, vaccination status must be verified each time a patron enters, unless the vaccination records have been uploaded and linked to a membership that is verified with each entry (such as at a gym).

Will facilities need to verify vaccination status for regulatory and repair service technicians entering the indoor area to perform a service? For example, water and gas repair and maintenance contractors?

- No. The Order applies to patrons of the facility and not to maintenance workers, inventory deliverers, and inspectors. They must be wearing a well-fitted mask, however.

How will this vaccination requirement be enforced?

- Relevant District agencies, such as DC Health, ABRA, and DCRA, will deploy staff for spot checks to ensure that businesses and organizations have appropriate processes in place to comply with Mayor's Order 2021-148. Absent good faith efforts to comply, businesses and organizations may be subject to appropriate enforcement actions, including civil fines of not more than \$1,000 and/or summary suspension or revocation of business license(s).

Is vaccination required for private parties at covered businesses?

- Yes. Vaccination verification and existing masking requirements, regardless of vaccination status, apply to all indoor private parties that are held in covered businesses including bars, restaurants, nightclubs, and event halls, and even exempt facilities like houses of worship must comply when hosting parties and private events other than religious events.

Are masks still required indoors after vaccination verification?

- Yes, as long as the Mayor's Order regarding masking remains in effect. (2021-147). Masks may be removed when someone is actively eating and drinking.

Does the vaccine requirement apply to employees?

- No, the vaccine requirement does not apply to employees currently.

For events, can a venue/event manager confirm proof of vaccination prior to the event?

- Yes, if the venue/event manager confirms with a list at the door of patrons who have provided proof of vaccination prior to the event with photo identification. Any patron who did not provide proof of vaccination prior would need to for entry.

Is there a grace period for individuals who recently turned 12?

- Vaccines have been available for individuals ages 5+ since November 2, 2021. As such, there is no grace period for individuals who recently turned 12.