



≡ BC RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICES ASSOCIATION VACCINE CARD IMPLEMENTATION SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS FOR STAFF



The British Columbia Restaurant and Foodservices Association is a dedicated resource to help restaurateurs grow and succeed in business in our province.

VACCINE CARD IMPLEMENTATION: SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS FOR STAFF

On September 13, the Province of BC launched the Vaccine Card program as part of their targeted COVID-19 response. The Vaccine Card program is designed to help protect people and reduce transmission of the virus. As 87.5% of British Columbians now have 1 vaccine, the goal is to work with the businesses to stay open and continue to serve their customers with a much lower risk of potential transmission.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Under this program, individuals must show their vaccine card gain admittance to certain non-essential activities including restaurants, pubs and bars:

Approval in stage 1: 1 vaccination by September 13

Approval in stage 2: 2 vaccinations by October 24

F&B BUSINESSES TYPES REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE:

If you are any of the following types of foodservice businesses, you are required to check vaccine cards for your guests, regardless of whether they dine inside and outside:

- Food primary with table service including cafés
- Liquor primary establishment of any type: restaurant, café, pub, bar, lounge or nightclub
- Liquor manufacturing facilities that have tasting rooms with seating
- Private clubs
- Restaurants (licensed and unlicensed) with buffet service

It is not optional to participate in the Vaccine Card program in BC if you are any of the above business types. There are fines for your business starting at \$2300 if you choose to act against this Public Health Order.

NAVIGATING CHALLENGING GUESTS:

COVID regulations continue to bring out customers that are frustrated by the Government of BC's Regulations and Public Health Orders. Navigating confused, frustrated or even angry customers can be very challenging.

As we continue to navigate these unprecedented times, BCRFA is working with businesses across the sector to collect best practices and suggestions on roll plays with customers.

Our front-of-house have always been the first line of setting the tone for a positive guest experience. In COVID, these people have had to take on the role of orienting customers to current protocols and setting the tone for reducing the spread of COVID in our businesses. This is very challenging.

In light of the Vaccine Card Program, we anticipate that some new conversations/ confrontations may arise and as such we want to provide you and your staff with some scripting on how to handle these situations.

OUR PRIMARY GOALS WITH CHALLENGING INTERACTIONS:

- Listen and empathize
- Offer solutions (ordering take out)
- Get support from team members
- Reduce the intensity of interactions
- Ensure staff are not mistreated

Frame any conversations with “we” (the establishment) not I (the individual working). The key is that this as something WE (the establishment) are required to do (ask and receive proof), and not as something THEY (the patrons) are required to do (provide). The business and the customer both have obligations to keeping each other safe in this pandemic.

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VACCINE CARD CUSTOMER ROLL PLAYS: GREETING NEW CUSTOMERS

For a walk up, table available, immediate dining:

Staff Person: “Table for four, we have something available, could we just check your proofs of vaccination please”

Actions: Scan the card using the app – or visually review the printed card - and then check IDs

FOR A WALK UP, WAIT LIST:

If all members of a party are present when putting a name on the waitlist, we suggest checking proof of vaccination at that point, time allowing, to make sure guests are able to enter when a table becomes available.

Staff Person: “Table for four, that’ll be about 45 minutes, would you like to be put on the waitlist? Good, can we get a name and phone number? Thank you. To speed things up for you would you like us to check your proof of vaccination now please? Thank you.

If only partial members of a party are there, save the vaccine card review for when they arrive with their whole party. Remind them to have their ID and cards ready for review when they come back.

Staff Person: “Table for four, that’ll be about 45 minutes, would you like to be put on the waitlist? Good, can we get a name and phone number? Thank you. To speed things up for you when you come back, please have your proof of vaccination and IDs ready.

FOR A RESERVATION FOR A FUTURE DATE OVER THE PHONE (OR AT DOOR):

Staff Person: “So that’s a table for 6, on the 18th, at 7 pm, can we get a name and contact... thank you. When you arrive, please ensure that all of your guests over the age of 12 have proof of vaccination as required by the current health regulations.”

FOR FAMILIES OR GROUPS WITH CHILDREN AROUND 12 YEARS OLD:

The current PHO doesn’t require photo ID for persons 12 to 18, so for this age group, just proof of first vaccination is required. Always do adults first and then assess children.

Staff Person: “Are any of your children 12 or over? If so we’re required to check their proof of vaccination as well.”

FOR CHILDREN OBVIOUSLY OVER 12, BUT OBVIOUSLY UNDER 19:

Staff Person: “We’re required to verify proof of vaccination for people between 12 and 19 but no photo ID. If you get your cards out, we can quickly review them and get you seated.”

This is an area where we could run into some conflict, patrons may arrive with teenagers in tow but not their vaccine cards. If they say that their teen is over 12, or the teen is obviously over 12 but under 19, and then don’t have a card:

Staff Person: “I’m sorry, but we’re required by provincial regulations to verify proof of vaccination for all patrons over 12, is there any way that you could get that information for us?”

FOR PATRONS AROUND 19:

Treat them as if we’re verifying their age, and ask for photo ID first (as if we were checking for legal drinking age) and then ask for proof of vaccination.

Staff Person: “Can we just see your ID please? Thank you... and your proof of vaccination?”

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VACCINE CARD ROLL PLAYS: CONFUSED CUSTOMERS

Guest: I don't know about this passport, what do I have to do?

~ or ~

I didn't know about the passport, what are my options?

Staff Person: “We have some flexibility in these first 2 weeks, do you have the paper record of your vaccination that you can provide (until September 26th)? If you are able to access the internet on your phone, it only takes a few seconds to sign up if you have your health number and the date of your vaccination. We can give you the website info if you need it.

Guest: What is the passport all about? I'm not from BC.

Staff Person: The Vaccine Card program is a BC government program that just came into effect. It is designed to reduce transmission of the virus in businesses like ours. As someone from out of BC, we just need to visually check your vaccination record from your home province (or your ArriveCan App) and a piece of ID. If you don't have vaccination records, the best we can offer is some great takeout.”

Guest: I am not from the province and did not prepare, vaccine cards are not mandatory where I am from.

~ or ~

I am from out of the country, what can I show you to prove my vaccine status?

Staff Person: We are able to visually review your ID from your region/country and your vaccine record (or Arrive Can app). If you don't have it onsite, we can offer take out and we can assist you in accessing your vaccine record in any way, please let us know.

Guest: What do I do, I left my vaccination record/vaccine card at home or I do not have my government issued photo ID with me?

Staff Person: We are terribly sorry but in order to operate we must comply with all public health orders and will face fines if we do not. We can order take out for you – or we can place an order that will be ready for you when you return from getting the card from your car or your home.

VACCINE CARD ROLL PLAYS: CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

Guest: Why are you following this order? It seems/is discriminatory.

Staff Person: This is a public health order and as a restaurant (or café/pub/brewery/winery) that operates in BC, we are required to comply with it to reduce the spread of COVID in businesses and increase guest safety.

Guest: I hope you lose money and customers for taking this stance.

Staff Person: We're sorry you feel that way. We would be happy to offer take out but that is our only option while we are required to follow these health orders. If we don't comply, fines start at \$2300 for our business.

Guest: Are all staff vaccinated?

Staff Person: Our staff have a high level of vaccination and we adhere to all the COVID-19 public health orders and protocols. However, we aren't able to record or share our staff vaccination status – just as we don't record yours.

Guest: I will never come back / you have lost my business.

Staff Person: In order for us to operate, we must follow all guidelines and regulations set out by the Public Health Officer and the Government of BC.

~ or ~

We understand the passport isn't everyone's taste but we are required to check vaccine cards for guests following the Public Health Order. The order does not individuals who are working at our business.

Guest: Why can I go to a fast food restaurant (or food court/ coffee shop) and not here without a passport?

Staff Person: The rules and regulations on the venues that are included in BC's Vaccine Card Program are decided on by the BC Government. As a licensed business, we are required to follow these orders. We can't speak to other businesses.

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Guest: Why is my medical history any of your business?

Staff Person: Our only concern is whether you have the 1 shot required by the Vaccine Card program at this time. We do not keep any information. We simply review your vaccine card and match it to your id. We don't record it in order to maintain your privacy.

VACCINE CARD ROLL PLAYS: ESCALATING SITUATION

If someone seems to be prepared to cause a fuss or is refusing on principle, the starting point is to stress that it's not our decision and that it's required of all operators. This isn't a business decision, it's a safety decision made by the government that we are working with to help get us out of this interminable pandemic.

The escalating responses are:

LEVEL 1 –

Guest: I don't think I should have to show a passport.

Staff Person: We're sorry but it's required for us to verify your proof of vaccination. We're unfortunately not able to serve you if you decline to provide us with verification. We can offer you take-out and will work hard to make sure the meal is just as delicious if you dined in.

LEVEL 2 –

Guest: I don't care about the government rules. I want to be served and I'm not leaving until you serve me.

Call over a manager on duty AND:

Staff Person: We're sorry but it's required for us to verify your proof of vaccination. We can be fined for not complying with this order. It is not an option for us. If you wish to discuss this further, we can give you the phone number to contact the ministry responsible.

LEVEL 3 –

Guest escalates: I'm not leaving. I demand service.

If you haven't called a manager, call one immediately.

Staff Person: Say "Excuse me while we get you a manager" and nothing else. This is now out of the hands of a server or host.

Manager: We're sorry, but this is not an issue that we can resolve for you. We are complying with health orders in order to stay open which is very important to our business. We won't be able to accommodate you today, and we're going to have to ask you to leave.

Optional: "We suggest you contact your MLA to share your concerns."

LEVEL 4 –

Guest won't leave after being asked to leave once, and continues to argue.

Manager: We're sorry, but we've asked you to leave and you're now causing a disturbance and negatively impacting our operations and other guests' experiences. We're going to ask you again to leave, if you don't leave the premises immediately we'll be forced to call the police.

LEVEL 5 –

Manager: No longer engage them in conversation. If they still refuse to leave, call the police. If they continue to argue and yell or shout, do not engage in any way, but call the police and say you'd like to report a public disturbance.