

Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test Requirements for City of Saskatoon Facilities

ISSUE

The emergence of the SARS CoV-2 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) resulted in several adjustments to the City of Saskatoon's Occupational Health and Safety and Business Continuity Plans. These adjustments followed the public health directions from the Government of Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan, and local Medical Health Officers to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace and community.

On October 1, 2021 the Government of Saskatchewan issued a [Public Health Order Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test](#) (the "October 1 Public Health Order"). The October 1 Public Health Order required individuals over the age of 12 to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a negative test result for public access to a range of businesses and event venues.

The City of Saskatoon implemented the October 1 Public Health Order within City of Saskatoon facilities. This included: fitness and weight rooms, gymnasiums, sports courts and tracks, land fitness classes, meeting, and multi-purpose rooms. The Public Health Order did not apply to aquatic areas and programs, private gatherings held at public venues (e.g., private rentals of meeting and multi-purpose rooms) and indoor arenas.

RECOMMENDATION

That City Council approves the Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test Requirements for City of Saskatoon Facilities as outlined in Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND

At its September 27, 2021 Regular Business meeting, Saskatoon City Council approved the "Framework for Measures to Mitigate the Transmission of COVID-19 in Saskatoon" (the "Framework"). An accompanying report described the implementation process of the various measures contained in the framework. For any measures, at any level that have a significant impact on residents, Administration will report to City Council regarding the activation of the measure. This report is informed by a consultation with the local Saskatchewan Health Authority Medical Health Officer(s), any current Public Health Orders, and the current COVID-19 situation in Saskatoon.

The only time that Administration will act without direction from City Council on measures that impact customers is when there is a Provincial Public Health Order that supersedes municipal measures. This occurred with the October 1 Public Health Order. The Administration has implemented the October 1 Public Health Order for City facilities as required in the order.

The City of Saskatoon Leisure Centres are multi-use facilities, and the October 1 Public Health Order applies to some programs and services within these facilities and not others. This has created challenges for staff and confusion for residents who are accessing these programs and services. The intent of the October 1 Public Health Order is to provide another layer of COVID-19 safety for not only staff, but also those accessing events and facilities. Since the order only applies to some programs and services, the overall impact to COVID-19 safety, of the whole facility, is not fully realized. When consulted the Provincial Business Response Team, suggested, for multi-use facilities that contain an aquatic facility, all patrons be required to provide proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test in order to gain entry as described in the October 1 Public Health Order. In addition, indoor arenas are not specifically identified in the Public Health Order which has resulted in a range of treatments across the province and in Saskatoon.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Implementing proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test requirements for City of Saskatoon facilities will align with the October 1st, Public Health Order and the Framework. The City's implementation would follow the same process and procedures in the order but broaden the scope to include this as a requirement for access to all programs and services within the facilities identified in Appendix 1.

The Administration is recommending that everyone over the age of 12 be required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test for access to all indoor leisure centers and indoor arenas. In order to support this directive and the on-site staff, Commissionaires would be in place at all identified facilities to confirm the proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test upon entry.

Subject to approval by City Council, the requirement of proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test can be implemented at the indoor Leisure Centers and indoor arenas as soon as the required support resources are in place and effected user groups have been updated by way of the communication plan. The Administration is targeting full implementation by October 15th. The Administration would be including the requirements for a proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test into future rental contracts for all user groups accessing Leisure Centers and Indoor Arenas.

The Administration has conducted a review of the local arena market and identified a range of protocols regarding proof of vaccination ranging from none required, required for ages 18 and older, to required for access by all people age 12 and older. For example, Merlis Belsher Place requires proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 test, taken within the past 48 hours, for everyone, ages 12 & older, who attend or participate in all on-campus activities, including Merlis Belsher Place. The Administration's recommendation is in alignment with the University of Saskatchewan for access to their recreation facilities.

The October 1 Public Health Order exempts public libraries from the proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test requirement. Administration would follow this direction for those Saskatoon Public Libraries located within Leisure Centres.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Commissionaires are currently in place in all leisure facilities to confirm proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test upon entry. This currently costs \$13,000/week. There would be no additional costs for those locations with the approval of this report. Commissionaires would be added to indoor arenas to confirm proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test upon entry. This is estimated to cost \$10,000/week for indoor arenas. The additional support will remain in place and be reviewed monthly and will be included in future updates to City Council.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

Should Council approve the recommendation, the new requirement will be communicated to residents and customers through a news release on October 8, social media posts, updates on saskatoon.ca, the Leisure Centre newsletter and posters at all applicable facilities. User groups of the facilities will be contacted directly by Recreation & Community Development staff to implement the new requirements.

APPENDICES

1. Implementation Plan: Proof of Vaccination or Negative Test Requirements for City of Saskatoon Facilities

Report Approval

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