



PUBLIC HEALTH INSIDER

OFFICIAL INSIGHTS FROM PUBLIC HEALTH – SEATTLE & KING COUNTY STAFF



CONFIRM YOUR VACCINATION: A NEW REQUIREMENT FOR MANY ACTIVITIES IN KING COUNTY

 *Public Health Insider*

Preventable COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are at extremely high levels in King County, and deaths are increasing. A new Public Health—Seattle & King County (Public Health) policy, [announced on September 16, 2021](#), will create an additional layer of protection from COVID-19.

Public Health Officer Dr. Jeff Duchin has issued a Health Order that will require people attending recreational activities in most public places to show [proof that they have been vaccinated against COVID-19](#). The Order takes effect on October 25. People who are unvaccinated or cannot prove vaccine status will be required to show proof of a negative PCR COVID-19 test in the last 72 hours, or an FDA-approved rapid test result from test conducted by a testing provider on site at an event or establishment just prior to entry.

[The Order](#) is intended to make public spaces safer for everyone. It aims to slow the virus's spread in our community, and to relieve pressure on our overburdened healthcare system. It broadens and reinforces the vaccine verification policies that many restaurants, professional sports teams, universities, and businesses already have in place.

We know that the vaccines **dramatically reduce** a person's risk of needing to be hospitalized from COVID-19. Vaccines dramatically reduce the chances of dying. Vaccines are free and widely available to anyone age 12 and up.

Getting as many people vaccinated as possible is the surest way to control the pandemic. With proof of vaccination, along with other layers of protection such as masks, residents can feel safer enjoying concerts, sporting events, and social gatherings in public.

Where will vaccine verification be required?

Starting October 25, people will be required to show proof of vaccination in a number of public places, such as:

- Outdoor events with 500 or more people
- Indoor recreational activities of any size, such as performances, movie theaters, conferences, or gyms
- Indoors at bars and restaurants (outdoor dining, grocery stores, and take-out are exempt)

The Order also gives the option of a longer preparation period for smaller restaurants and bars with a seating capacity of 12 or fewer, with an implementation date of December 6. The entire order is not expected to be permanent. It will last for six months starting October 25. It will be reviewed for possible extension based on future outbreak conditions.

Public Health strongly encourages faith-based organizations to voluntarily adopt a vaccine verification policy, but it is not mandatory at this time. The policy also does not apply to children age 11 or younger, who are not yet eligible to get the vaccine.

People can verify that they've been vaccinated in a number of ways. They can show:

- A CDC Vaccine card or photo of vaccine card
- Documented proof of vaccination from medical record or vaccine provider
- Proof of vaccination from another state or country

- Digital record or printed certificate from MyIRMobile.com or other apps

A person is considered “fully vaccinated” two weeks after their second dose of Moderna or Pfizer or their first dose of Johnson & Johnson. You do *not* have to show identification, such as a driver’s license, when showing proof of vaccination.

How we got here

King County continues to follow the science and changing circumstances of the pandemic. Rates of COVID-19 remain very high in King County. Hospitals and healthcare providers are strained to their limits. These conditions make it necessary to take additional steps to protect the public and prevent more burdensome measures, such as limiting capacity at businesses or closing schools.

An [analysis](#) by the University of Washington’s Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) conducted for King County found that the vaccine verification policy at restaurants, bars and gyms/fitness centers alone could prevent between 17,900 and 75,900 infections, 421 and 1,760 hospitalizations and 63 and 257 deaths locally over the six months of the order. King County and Public Health developed the vaccine verification policy in consultation with Public Health’s [Pandemic and Racism Community Advisory Group](#), cities, small businesses, chambers of commerce, labor unions, trade associations, sports teams, venues, community groups, and faith-based leaders throughout the county. This engagement helped create a policy that aims to be workable, fair, and equitable for businesses and residents.

Employers, their employees, and volunteers, must implement this Order equitably and may not discriminate based on an individual’s race, national origin, religion, or age. Businesses and venues should provide reasonable accommodation for those who are unable to provide proof of vaccination due to a disability.

Several other local governments have already adopted some form of vaccine verification policy, including New York City, San Francisco, the State of California, British Columbia in Canada, and Clallam and Jefferson counties in Washington state.

Last week, several local sports teams and venues, including the Seattle Seahawks, Seattle Sounders FC, Seattle Kraken, Seattle Storm, University of Washington Huskies, and all events at Climate Pledge Arena adopted vaccination verification policies.

- Find a [vaccination site](#) in your neighborhood
- Washington state Dept. of Health [MyIR vaccine records system](#)

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