



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements - Guidelines for Request for Reconsideration (Exemption) Process for Health Care Workers affected by the Provincial Health Officer Orders

October 7, 2021

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) has issued Preventive Measures [Orders](#) under the *Public Health Act* which require individuals who work in health care in BC to be vaccinated against COVID-19. These orders are intended to reduce COVID-19 case rates, outbreaks, hospitalizations, critical care admissions, and deaths, protect people who cannot be vaccinated, and protect our healthcare system.

The purpose of these Orders is to protect those most vulnerable to complications of COVID-19, to protect health care workers, to prevent disruptions to care and to reduce incidence of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. For these reasons it is important that people who can be fully vaccinated, do so.

Exemptions

Under section 43 of the *Public Health Act*, a person who is subject to an Order of the Provincial Health Officer can submit a request for reconsideration (exemption) from an Order's requirements.

Due to the nature of health care work risk to their health and the health of patients, residents and clients that make them more vulnerable to serious COVID-19 outcomes, there is a necessity to ensure that there is a low risk posed by health care workers providing care.

These guidelines provide some general principles for requests for reconsideration under Public Health Act section 43. If you would like the PHO to depart from these general principles in considering your request, please explain why. If you have questions about this process please contact the Office of the Provincial Health Officer at the contact information below, with the subject line "Requests for Reconsideration Question".

Process to submit a request for reconsideration (exemption)

Submitting an exemption request does not guarantee that you will receive an exemption.



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**If you have fever, a new cough, or are
having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.**



The PHO order states that “A request for reconsideration for the purpose of seeking a medical exemption must include a signed and dated statement from a medical practitioner, based upon a current assessment, that the health of the person would be seriously jeopardized if the person were to comply with the Order, and a signed and dated copy of each portion of the person’s health record relevant to this statement.”

To be considered for an exemption you will likely have had a dose of vaccine and experienced a serious adverse event or have a pre-existing medical condition the warrants being exempted for a period of time. It is important to note that being exempted from a PHO order requirement is not equivalent to a permanent deferral to being vaccinated. Some people for whom a vaccination deferral has been recommended may get a dose at a later date. If you have been granted an exemption to PHO requirements, and you do get vaccinated at a later date, you should notify the PHO at the contact information below to update your exemption status. A decision to get vaccinated remains a decision for the individual in consultation with their health care provider.

Conditions that could warrant an exemption include¹:

1. Anaphylaxis to components of both mRNA and adenovirus vector vaccine (i.e., polyethylene glycol and polysorbate 80) that has been confirmed by a qualified allergist who offers testing and graded dose administration procedures.
2. Receipt of anti SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma for treatment or prevention of COVID-19 (except tocilizumab or sarilumab).
3. Diagnosis of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome.
4. Medical practitioner-diagnosed myocarditis or pericarditis following the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine with no other cause identified.
5. Serious adverse event following first dose of COVID-19 vaccine awaiting recommendation for further vaccination by the medical health officer. Serious adverse events are those that required urgent medical care, resulted in hospitalization, or permanent disability.
6. Serious adverse event following first dose of vaccine not yet reported to the medical health officer.
7. Serious adverse event following a dose of vaccine and recommendation by the medical health officer to not receive further doses.

¹ Based on expert advice from BC Centre for Disease Control, BC public health officials, and allergy specialists.



To submit an exemption request, follow these directions:

For people who experienced a serious adverse reaction to COVID-19 vaccination

1. If you experienced a serious adverse reaction to a dose of vaccine that could warrant an exemption, you should have reported the reaction to the health care provider that gave you the vaccination, and you should have received a recommendation from a medical health officer.

If you did not report the reaction, then the first step is to report that event to your health care provider, who needs to report the reaction to the medical health officer. You should also confirm that your health care provider reported your reaction to the medical health officer, and wait for a recommendation from a medical health officer. Your health care provider should complete and submit a COVID-19 vaccine adverse event report using the form located at tinyurl.com/5nbpyu23.

2. If you have received a recommendation from a medical health officer about your reaction, or once you receive a recommendation after the reaction has been reported to a medical health officer, then send that information to the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, as described below.

For people who have a medical condition that warrants consideration of an exemption

1. You need to have your medical practitioner (a registrant of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia) or nurse practitioner (a registrant of the British Columbia College of Nurse and Midwives) fill out the attached form and give it back to you so that you can submit it to the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, as described below.
2. Your request must be accompanied by the medical deferral form attached, supporting the request.

Inform your supervisor that you are submitting an exemption request

Your employer needs to know that you are requesting an exemption to ensure that your employer is aware so that they can assist with managing your situation. We also need to be able to communicate with your supervisor about the status of your exemption request. We will not be sharing medical information with your employer.

Information to be submitted

You must submit the request package with the subject line **Request for Reconsideration about Preventive Measures** and the following information:

1. Your name and contact information.



2. The name of the facility / facilities you work in, and location with full mailing address. You must also include the contact information of a management representative of the facility including name, position, email, and phone number. Provision of this information is your consent that we can communicate with your employer regarding the outcome of your request.
3. If you have been informed by a medical health officer that you should not receive additional doses of a COVID-19 vaccine due to an adverse event following immunization, submit a copy of the letter from the medical health officer indicating that you should not receive additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine.
4. If needed to support an exemption request in relation to a medical condition, the COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Deferral form filled out, signed, and dated by your medical practitioner who assessed you.
5. Your preferred method of response i.e., email, mail, fax.

Submit the request by mail, fax or email to:

Office of the Provincial Health Officer

PO Box 9648 STN PROV GOVT, Victoria BC V8W 9P4

Fax: (250) 952-1570

Email: PHOExemptions@gov.bc.ca

Note: The PHO recommends that personal information sent by email be sent using a password protected email, with the password sent by separate email.

After you submit an exemption request

1. You must notify your employer of your exemption request.
2. You and your employer will be notified of receipt of your exemption request.
3. If your request is incomplete, you will be contacted to provide additional information to continue the review process.
4. Your request may be assessed by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and/or it may be referred to the local medical health officer.



5. Once a decision has been made by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer or the local medical health officer, if an exemption is granted it may be subject to recommended risk reduction measures for you to take. You will be notified in writing of the exemption and will be provided with written instructions and direction as appropriate.
6. If your request is denied, you will be provided with the reasons why and information on a review process, if available.
7. Your employer will be informed of the outcome of your exemption request directly by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer or the local medical health officer and required risk reduction measures.
8. If you have been granted an exemption to PHO requirements, and you do get vaccinated at a later date, you should notify the PHO to update your exemption contacting the PHO as above.

