



COVID-19 Vaccination Policy of the Diocese of Hamilton- Amendments

Above all, clothe yourselves in love

PROOF OF VACCINATION

The Diocese requires to know the vaccination status of all Employees and volunteers. A sample of the most common type of proof of vaccinations is attached (Appendix A). You can obtain your proof of vaccination by visiting <https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/vaccine-receipt>.

- Clergy will provide proof of vaccination to Monsignor Murray Kroetsch at: chancellor@hamiltondiocese.com.
- Employees will provide proof of vaccination to Ms. Gagan Gill at: ggill@hamiltondiocese.com.
- Volunteers should provide proof of vaccination to their Parish Priest (or his delegate). If the Parish Priest prefers not to handle this task, volunteers will provide proof of vaccination to Ms. Gagan Gill at: ggill@hamiltondiocese.com.

At this time we only require proof of vaccination from those volunteers who are active in Parish life, will be attending functions at the Parish or will be volunteering during times of the day where they will come in contact with other individuals. So for example if your Finance council has been meeting by zoom and will continue to meet by zoom, proof of vaccination is not needed, unless of course members are involved in other active ministries. Please contact Jim Long for further clarification.

Proof of vaccination can be mailed, couriered or emailed. If mailing or courier your proof of vaccination, the mailing address is as follows:

Monsignor M. Kroetsch or Ms. Gagan Gill
700 King Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 1C7

If you are emailing your proof of vaccination please save the document into a pdf or jpeg before attaching it to your email.

When providing proof of vaccination to Ms. Gagan Gill please provide your Name, Parish, City and Position. I have provided a form (Appendix B) that employees and volunteers may wish to include when submitting proof of vaccination.

Proof of vaccination is required by October 31st, 2021. Clergy, Employees and volunteers who, by October 31st, 2021, disclose that they have not received Full Vaccination or who have not disclosed their vaccination status as required, shall be subject to the terms of the Policy for unvaccinated individuals.

UNVACCINATED CLERGY, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Clergy, Staff and Volunteers with a valid exemption under the Code, or who choose not to receive Full Vaccination without an exemption, must provide proof at their own expense of a negative rapid COVID-19 test every Monday and Thursday morning, except if such Clergy or Staff are on vacation or are on sick leave that day, in which case proof shall be provided on the day that the Clergy or Staff return to work.

- Clergy shall provide negative test results to the Monsignor Murray Kroetsch by email. Only a negative test from a third part testing facility will be accepted for Clergy. Tests are valid for 24 hours. Appendix C is an example of the results of a test from Shoppers Drug Mart. Most drug stores and pharmacies provide these services.

If the Parish Priest agrees to monitor Staff, acceptable tests are either those tests from a third party testing facility or a rapid test administered by a delegate appointed by the Parish Priest. Unfortunately for Clergy, as leaders of your Parish, proper control procedures do not allow you to administer your own rapid test.

- Staff shall provide negative test results to the Parish Priest or his designate if the Priest agrees to take on the responsibility or to Ms. Gagan Gill if he doesn't. If the Parish Priest agrees to monitor Staff, acceptable tests are either those tests from a third party testing facility or a rapid test administered by the Parish Priest or his delegate.

If the Parish Priest does not agree to monitor staff the only acceptable negative test will be tests from a third party testing facility, these tests are valid for 24 hours. Appendix C is an example of the results of a test from Shoppers Drug Mart. Most drug stores and pharmacies provide these services. Please note that Parishes are not obligated to administer rapid tests.

- Volunteers, who are in contact with Parishioners, such as Choir Members and Ushers can provide services to the Parish as long as the Parish Priest agrees to this and agrees to take on the responsibility of administering tests. Tests are only required on the days they are volunteering. The Chancery Office will not be administering test results for volunteers.

If the Parish Priest agrees to monitor Volunteers, acceptable tests are either those tests from a third party testing facility or a rapid test administered by the Parish Priest or his delegate. If the Parish Priest does not agree to monitor Volunteers, Volunteers will not

be able to provide services to the Parish. Please note that Parishes are not obligated to allow unvaccinated Volunteers to provide services to the Parish.

Please visit [COVID-19 testing locations \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/covid-19-testing-locations) to find a testing location in your area.

OBTAINING FREE RAPID TESTS

Rapid tests can be obtained from most local Chamber of Commerce, please google your local City or Region to find where tests are available. For example, in Hamilton tests can be obtained by visiting [Rapid Antigen Testing - Rapid screen, point of care or POC testing | City of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada](#).

Please note that Parishes who wish to participate in rapid testing must adhere to the Provinces Guidelines which are available on the City or Regions websites and included in Appendix D. The main issues are as follows:

- Ensuring that all personal information is retained in accordance to the Diocese's privacy policy.
- Planning, developing, and operationalizing policies and procedures related to testing.
- Cooperating with their local public health unit in the event of a potential workplace exposure of COVID-19 or an outbreak investigation.
- Properly storing and disposing of the test waste with registered haulers (approved to carry biomedical waste) to ensure ongoing protection of human health and the environment.

Parishes are encouraged to read all the available documentation and make a decision that is best for their Parish.

USE OF PARISH HALLS

Based on the wording of various government, it can reasonably be surmised that Parish Halls would constitute meeting or event spaces when used for non-parish events and that proof of vaccinations would be required for such "social gatherings" at Parish Halls, but gatherings for religious purposes would not appear to be subject to vaccine passport requirements.

Based on our Legal Counsel's understanding of the Step 3 Regulation, a "social gathering" (which is also not legally defined) would require Vaccine Proof. This would include social gatherings, such as birthday parties and family reunions held at meeting or event spaces.

However, based on a narrow interpretation of the term, a social gathering would not include gatherings for religious purposes (*i.e.* a non-social purpose), such as RCIA, communion preparation, prayer groups, or parent and children movie days that are intended for religious education reasons. This would also exclude purposes that are not social gatherings, but rather connected to the administration (business-related) of a parish, such as a finance council meeting, money counting or employee training.

For purpose of this Policy, the Diocese includes CWL, SVDP and the Knights of Columbus meetings as non-social events and will not require vaccine passports.

Having said this, there is no prohibition on requiring Vaccine Proof from all “patrons” of the hall, if the Parish chooses to err on the side of caution. However, doing so may involve substantial administrative burdens, much of which may be unnecessary based on the actual requirements of the Step 3 Regulation.

CONTRACTORS (WITH A CONTRACTS WITH THE DIOCESE)

Contractors who have a contract with the Diocese (Music Ministers, Cooks and Cleaners) can provide services to the Parish as long as the Parish Priest agrees to this and agrees to take on the responsibility of administering tests. Tests are only required on the days they are working at Parish. The Chancery Office will not be administering test results for Contractors.

If the Parish Priest agrees to monitor Contractors, acceptable tests are either those tests from a third party testing facility or a rapid test administered by the Parish Priest or his delegate. If the Parish Priest does not agree to monitor Contractors, Contractors will not be able to provide services to the Parish. Please note that Parishes are not obligated to allow unvaccinated Contractors to provide services to the Parish.

CONTRACTORS (OTHER)

Parish Priest must use their discretion when allowing independent contractors (snow plow companies, plumbers, electricians, landscapers, etc.) onto Parish premises. Your decision should be based on the type of work being done, their interactions with staff and Parishioners and the Covid policy of the Company providing the work.

MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS

People are required to wear masks in indoor areas of the Diocese’s premises, Ontario Regulation 364/20 under the Reopening Ontario Act (“Ontario Regulation”) states that the person responsible for an organization shall ensure that any person in an indoor area of the premises of an organization wears a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin during any period when they are in the indoor area unless subsection (4) applies to the person in the indoor area.

There are several exceptions to the mask requirement which are set out in subsection 2(4) of the Ontario Regulation which are as follows:

- The person has a medical condition that inhibits their ability to wear a mask or face covering.
- The person is being accommodated in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
- The person is being reasonably accommodated in accordance with the Human Rights Code.

Evidence supporting a mask exemption does not need to be provided, importantly, “it is not necessary” for a person claiming an exemption to present evidence of the exception they are claiming.

Please note there is a difference between not wanting to wear a mask and having a medical exemption for not wearing a mask. So for example the mask me uncomfortable or makes it hard for me to breath does not constitute a medical condition. If someone decides to claim that they have a medical condition and that therefore they cannot wear masks, then the Diocese cannot request that they provide proof of a medical exemption.