



Chicago Vaccine Requirement Frequently Asked Questions

To help stop the spread of COVID-19, the City of Chicago issued Public Health Order 2021-2, which requires certain establishments to verify that patrons are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

When does the Order go into effect?

Effective January 3, 2022, any individual 5 years of age or older will be required to show proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to dine indoors, visit gyms, or enjoy entertainment venues where food or drink are being served.

Why is this requirement necessary?

This new requirement is in response to an alarming rise in COVID-19 cases both locally and nationally, driven in part by the Omicron variant, and is similar to requirements already in place in other big cities including New York City and Los Angeles.

How long will this requirement remain in effect?

The Public Health Order will remain in effect until the City of Chicago is through this Omicron-driven surge and the risk of overwhelming hospital capacity has passed.

What does it mean to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19?

People are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine

If you don't meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated.

What is considered valid proof of full vaccination?

CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card or an official immunization record from the jurisdiction, state, or country where the vaccine was administered or a digital or physical photo of such a card or record, reflecting the person's name, vaccine brand, and dates administered. Additionally, individuals over the age of 16 will need to provide identification with the same identifying information as the proof of vaccination.

Is proof of vaccination from another country also valid?

Yes, proof of vaccination from another country is also valid.

Who must display proof of vaccination?

Effective January 3, 2022, any individual 5 years of age or older will be required to show proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to dine indoors, visit gyms, or enjoy entertainment venues where food or drink are being served.

What about individuals under the age 5 who are not eligible for vaccination?

Individuals under the age of 5 may enter Chicago Vaccine Requirement establishments without displaying proof of vaccination so long as they wear a face mask, except when eating and drinking. Children age 2 and under are not required to wear a mask.

Is there a grace period for a recently-turned 5-year-old to have time to get vaccinated?

Recently turned 5-year-olds have 6 weeks from their 5th birthday to become fully vaccinated. During this grace period, they must show proof of at least one vaccine dose to enter a covered location.

What types of entities are required to ask for proof of vaccination?

- Indoor dining: Establishments where food or beverages are consumed, including, but not limited to, restaurants, bars, fast food establishments, coffee shops, tasting rooms, cafeterias open to the public, food courts, dining areas of grocery stores, breweries, wineries, distilleries, banquet halls, and hotel ballrooms; and
- Indoor fitness: Gyms and fitness venues, including, but not limited to, gyms, recreation facilities, fitness centers, yoga, pilates, cycling, barre, and dance studios, hotel gyms, boxing and kickboxing gyms, fitness boot camps, and other facilities used for conducting indoor group fitness classes; and
- Indoor entertainment and recreation venues where food or beverages are served: Including, but not limited to, movie theaters, music and concert venues, live

performance venues, adult entertainment venues, commercial event and party venues, sports arenas, performing arts theaters, bowling alleys, arcades, card rooms, family entertainment centers, play areas, pool and billiard halls, and other recreational game centers.

What types of entities are NOT required to ask for proof of vaccination?

The City's Order requiring proof of vaccination in public places does NOT include:

- houses of worship
- grocery stores (indoor dining sections are not exempt)
- locations in O'Hare International Airport or Midway International Airport
- pre-K-12 schools
- child care programs
- locations in residential or office buildings the use of which is limited to residents, owners, or tenants of that building
- food service establishments providing only charitable food services, such as soup kitchens
- hotels (indoor dining sections and fitness centers are not exempt)

Who is exempt from the City's Order that requires proof of vaccination?

The following individuals are exempted from the City's Order and do NOT need to provide proof of vaccination:

- Individuals entering an establishment for less than 10 minutes to order or carry out food, make a delivery or use the bathroom;
- A performing artist, or an individual accompanying such a performing artist, while the performing artist or individual is in a covered location for the purposes of such artist's performance;
- A professional or college athlete, or an individual accompanying such professional or college athlete, who enters a covered location as part of their regular employment or conduct for purposes of the professional or college athlete/sports team competition;
- Individuals who have previously received a medical or religious exemption, provided such patrons provide the covered entity proof of the medical or religious exemption and a COVID-19 test administered by a medical professional within the last 72 hours prior to entering a covered location



- Individuals 18 years of age or younger who enter a covered location to participate in an activity organized or sponsored by a school, the Chicago Park District, an afterschool program, a child care program, or other organization as may be authorized in Chicago Department of Public Health guidance; and
- Individuals voting in a municipal, state, or federal election; or, pursuant to law, assisting or accompanying a voter or observing such election.

Is proof of vaccination required for youth sports programs?

Yes, youth sports programs, unless explicitly exempted by the Chicago Department of Public Health, are required to obtain proof of vaccination for participants ages 5 and older.

If a repeat customer has previously shown me their proof of vaccination, do I need to check it again on subsequent visits?

While some of the management or staff of an establishment might recognize a patron and recall their proof of vaccination, others may not. Businesses should check vaccination status **each time** a patron enters their location.

Is proof of vaccination required for employees?

Proof of vaccination will not be required for employees, but unvaccinated employees will be required to test weekly. Weekly negative COVID-19 tests and wearing a mask when interacting with patrons will be mandatory. All covered entities shall comply with OSHA standards 1910.501(e) & (g) relating to employee vaccination status and testing, regardless of the number of their employees.

My unvaccinated employees are having difficulty getting timely test results. What can I do?

The expectation is that employees will consider the time needed for test scheduling and turn-around in order to be able to provide weekly test results to their employers, and make their test appointments accordingly. Employers could include information encouraging this planning in their written employee vaccination protocol. If a reporting delay occurs, employees can continue to work until they are received, but this should not be an excuse for those employees not making a good-faith effort to comply. In evaluating a business's compliance with the Order, the employer's written protocol and demonstrated efforts to comply will be taken into account.



This document was updated on 01/20/2022 and might be updated with new guidance. Find the latest information at chicago.gov/COVID.



What types of food service establishments are NOT required to comply with the Chicago Vaccine Requirement?

If an establishment offers only take-out, delivery or outdoor dining, any indoor tables, chairs, or other furnishings normally used by patrons for indoor dining must be removed or blocked off (e.g., with signs or tape) so they are unavailable for use.

How should establishments implement the City's Vaccine Requirement policy?

Establishments will be required to develop and keep a written record describing the protocol for implementing and enforcing the vaccine requirement. Also, establishments will be required to prominently post signage at each publicly accessible entrance to the covered location and at least one location inside the covered location that is conspicuously visible, informing patrons of the vaccination requirement.

What should an establishment do if they suspect a vaccine card is fraudulent?

The creation, purchase, or sale of vaccine cards by individuals is illegal and endangers public safety. Anyone with information regarding fraudulent COVID-19 vaccination cards can file a report by calling **1-800-CALL-FBI**. Tips may also be submitted anonymously to tips.fbi.gov. Additional details are available at the [FBI website](#).

Does the Order apply to outdoor dining structures?

The Order applies to any part of a covered location with a roof or overhang that is enclosed on at least three sides. The Order does not cover temporary outdoor structures for multiple parties that have at least 50% of the sides open to allow airflow nor dining structures for individual parties, such as plastic domes, that have adequate ventilation to allow for air circulation.

Who must comply with the Chicago Vaccine Requirement policy when a covered premise is being rented out for a wedding or other event?

Commercial event and party venues, as well as hotel meeting and event spaces, must comply with the Chicago Vaccine Requirement policy, when food and beverage is served. A covered entity may in the interests of efficiency allow patrons to provide the requisite proof prior to entry, either directly to the covered entity or through an intermediary such as an event planner.

What if an establishment has both indoor and outdoor portions?

This document was updated on 01/20/2022 and might be updated with new guidance. Find the latest information at chicago.gov/COVID.



If an establishment has both indoor and outdoor portions (for example, an indoor fitness center with an outdoor pool or a museum with indoor and outdoor spaces for patrons), only the indoor portion is covered by the Chicago Vaccine Requirement policy.

What if an establishment is being rented by a house of worship for a religious event?

If an establishment is being rented by a house of worship for a religious event, it is not covered by the Order requirements during the event.

What if an establishment is being used as a poll site for an election?

Proof of vaccination is not required in polling places.

Are individuals allowed to use the bathroom without showing proof of vaccination?

Yes, customers and patrons entering an establishment just to use the bathroom do not need to show proof of vaccination. They are still required to wear a face mask.

Are individuals allowed to use a locker room to change clothes without showing proof of vaccination?

No, indoor fitness venues must comply with the Chicago Vaccine Requirement policy.

How will the City's Order requiring proof of vaccination be enforced?

The Order may be enforced by the Commissioner of Health, Commissioner of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, the Commissioner of the Buildings, or the Chicago Police Department. In addition to any other penalty provided by law, any Covered entities that violate this Order may be subject to penalties, fines, sanctions, and arrest.

Does my business need to follow the Chicago Public Health Order or the Cook County Public Health Order if there are discrepancies?

Businesses in the City of Chicago must comply with the Health Order issued by the City of Chicago Commissioner of Health. However, in the event of a conflict or inconsistency between Public Health Order 2021-2 and any other Public Health Order, Executive Order, or the Phase 5 Guidance, the more restrictive alternative applies.

I lost my vaccination card. How can I verify my COVID-19 vaccine status?

If you lost your CDC card before getting a second dose, you can ask for a replacement card when you get your second dose.



If you lose your CDC card after you get your final dose, you can choose any of these options:

1. Contact the clinic or health provider where you were vaccinated. Ask for a replacement card. They will have a record of your vaccine there.
2. Get your immunization history through your healthcare provider. You can look it up yourself, in your online health record under the immunization history section. If you don't see it, ask your healthcare provider how to access your COVID-19 vaccine record.
3. Access your immunization records by visiting the State of Illinois [Vax Verify portal](#). Minors must have a parent/guardian request their record using the form on the [Immunization Record Request](#) and then email it to dph.icare@illinois.gov.

I'm having trouble using the Vax Verify site to access my immunization records. How can I get help?

The [Vax Verify](#) site is run by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). If you're having difficulty using their site to recover your immunization records, please review their extensive [Vax Verify FAQ](#) page.

If you still have questions after reviewing the FAQ materials, you can contact the email DPH.VaxVerify@illinois.gov for further assistance, or call the toll-free Vax Verify help number at **833-621-1284**, available Monday-Sunday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.