

VAX-PASS TENETS

Ontario businesses are ready for a safe, compassionate return to commerce, yet COVID-19 remains a threat to our communities, particularly to people who are immuno-compromised and families with young children who are not yet eligible for vaccination. COVID-19 vaccination is the single greatest risk mitigation tool against resurgence of the virus. COVID-19 vaccination mandates for permitted entry to workplaces and commercial spaces (vax-pass programs) are key to the prevention of viral spread to the protection of the most vulnerable groups in our society and the success of our economy.

Ontario businesses strive to do their part, but to date, the Government of Ontario has not heeded calls to implement a comprehensive vax-pass system. That void cannot be a barrier to action.

For businesses looking to implement a proof-of-vaccination framework, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce recommends the following Vax-Pass Tenets, which many Ontario businesses have already adopted. As more businesses proclaim and adopt these community standards, we will dispel harmful disinformation about the legality and efficacy of well-designed vax-pass programs and create shared confidence that we are on the right path to a safe economic and societal recovery.



Safety — Businesses should be guided by their obligation to take all reasonable steps necessary under the circumstances to protect the health and safety of their workforce and place of business.



Science — Businesses implementing vax-pass programs acknowledge that vaccination-based entry policies are consistent with the current science on COVID-19 and recommended public health best practices. Businesses should be aware of and, where necessary, responsive to ongoing public health developments and may consider seeking expert medical advice specific to their workplace/commercial spaces.



Accommodation — Businesses should ensure vax-pass programs provide for accommodation to the point of undue hardship under the Ontario Human Rights Code, where applicable.



Privacy — Businesses should use the least intrusive mechanism to verify vaccination status. Businesses should be aware of developments in government-issued vaccination “passports” or other technologies for vaccination verification, as these may make the administration of vax-pass programs significantly easier and more secure. In any case, businesses should follow their own privacy policies, applicable laws and applicable guidance from privacy commissioners in respect of the collection, use, disclosure, retention and destruction of vaccination status confirmation provided by individuals.



Transparency — Businesses should engage in a clear, ongoing dialogue with employees, customers and other partners about their vax-pass program to manage understanding and expectations and educate stakeholders about the importance of COVID-19 vaccination.

Together, we can move forward, safely.