

ADDENDUM to Eparchial Worship Safe Guidelines for the Province of Ontario (2021-09-17)

To all clergy and staff of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto & Eastern Canada
in the Province of Ontario

Introduction:

On September 1, 2021, the Province of Ontario announced that starting September 22, 2021, proof of vaccination will be required to access higher-risk indoor public settings where face coverings cannot always be worn. To access certain indoor facilities, individuals will need to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 government approved vaccine (two doses plus 14 days) and provide their proof of vaccination along with photo ID.

Among the settings where people are required to provide proof of vaccination are **meeting and event spaces**, such as banquet halls and conference/convention centres.

The following link gives further information on the requirement: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/guidance_proof_of_vaccination_for_businesses_and_organizations.pdf.

With these new regulations for the Province of Ontario, the following guidelines are being issued by the Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada:

1. Religious services (including Divine Liturgies, baptisms, weddings, and funerals): places of worship **do not require proof of vaccination**.

Indoor and outdoor gatherings are permitted with capacity limited to permit physical distancing of 2 metres. All COVID-19 protocols need to be observed including physical distancing and compliance with rules on masks (face coverings). The collecting of names and contact information is still required.

2. Indoor Meeting and Event spaces (i.e. parish halls):

Indoor events in meeting or event spaces are permitted to 50% capacity, with established rules regarding masking and physical distancing remaining in force.

A. **Proof of vaccination will be required**, starting September 22, 2021, from those seeking to attend most indoor events in meeting and event spaces.

B. For **funeral receptions** held in an indoor meeting and event space (i.e. **parish hall attached to the church**) located in a place of worship – **no proof of vaccination** is required.

C. For **funeral receptions** held in an indoor meeting and event space in a building separate from a place of worship (i.e. **parish hall not attached to the church**) – **proof of vaccination is required**.

NOTE: Between September 22, 2021 and October 13, 2021 a guest may be admitted based on results of an antigen test administered within the previous 48 hours establishing that the person is negative for COVID-19. That exemption expires on October 13.

D. For **marriage receptions** held in an indoor meeting and event space – **proof of vaccination is required**.

NOTE: Between September 22, 2021 and October 13, 2021 a guest may be admitted based on results of an antigen test administered within the previous 48 hours establishing that the person is negative for COVID-19. That exemption expires on October 13.

C. For all **other meetings and events** held in an indoor meeting and event space – **proof of vaccination is required.**

For more information see:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/guidance_proof_of_vaccination_for_businesses_and_organizations.pdf.

- Individuals must wear face masks in indoor public settings with limited exemptions.
- The maximum capacity must be posted.
- The person responsible for the facility must record the name and contact information of every member of the public who attends a meeting or event and must actively screen individuals. The COVID-19 customer screening tool may be used to meet this requirement.
- The rented space must be configured so patrons at different tables are 2 metres apart or separated by a barrier.
- The facility must have a safety plan available that outlines how it will meet public health and workplace safety measures.
- Additional restrictions apply if rented space is used for events that permit patron dancing:
 - The provisions related to food or drink establishments with dance facilities outlined in the regulation (for example, 25% capacity or 250 persons whichever is less) would apply where food or drink is sold or served while dance facilities are provided.
 - The legal requirements for meeting and event facilities may be found in sections 2-4 of Schedule 1 of the following link:
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200364>

3. Outdoor Meeting and Event spaces:

Outdoor gatherings or meetings are permitted to a capacity of 75%.

- A. All COVID-19 protocols need to be observed including physical distancing and compliance with mask rules (face coverings).
 - B. Due regard is to be given to the advice, recommendations and instructions of local or municipal public health officials.
 - C. The maximum capacity must be posted.
 - D. The person responsible for the facility must record the name and contact information of every member of the public who attends a meeting or event and must actively screen individuals. The facility may keep a register or use COVID-19 Questionnaire Forms to meet this requirement.
 - E. The rented space must be configured so guests at different tables are 2 metres apart or separated by a barrier.
 - F. If covered (i.e., roof, tent, canopy, etc.), an outdoor dining area must have at least two full sides of the dining area or one full side and the roof open and unobstructed.
 - G. The facility must have a safety plan available that outlines how it will meet public health and workplace safety measures.
- Additional restrictions apply if rented space is used for events that permit patron dancing:
 - The provisions related to food or drink establishments with dance facilities outlined in the regulation (for example, 25% capacity or 250 persons whichever is less) would apply where food or drink is sold or served while dance facilities are provided.

- The legal requirements for meeting and event facilities may be found in sections 2-4 of Schedule 1 of the following link:
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200364>

4. Indoor Meetings and Gatherings:

A. **Indoor meetings and gatherings with 25 or less:** COVID-19 protocols need to be observed including physical distancing and compliance with rules on face coverings. The collecting of names and contact information is required.

B. **Indoor meetings and gatherings with 26 or more:** COVID-19 protocols need to be observed including physical distancing and compliance with rules on face coverings. The collecting of names, contact information and **proof of vaccination is required.**

5. Outdoor Meetings and Gatherings:

A. A maximum of 100 people are allowed for outdoor meetings and gatherings. COVID-19 protocols need to be observed including physical distancing and compliance with rules on face coverings. The collecting of names and contact information is required.

B. Outdoor meetings and gatherings with 101 or more people must follow all the rules of section 3 above.

6. Funeral Services at Funeral Home Chapels:

Effective September 10, 2021, the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO), which regulates operations of funeral homes in Ontario, has implemented a Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (see separate attached document).

The policy sets minimum required standards for all funeral homes employees, staff, contractors, volunteers, students, and interns, but does not apply to guests attending a funeral service.

However, individual funeral homes may impose further restrictions. We urge all pastors/parochial administrators to reach out to their local funeral homes in regard to their COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and its application particularly toward clergy and church staff (i.e. cantors) officiating at funeral service on the premises of the funeral home.

IF BAO VACCINATION POLICY IS APPLIED TO CLERGY & CHURCH STAFF:

Note that clergy and church staff (i.e. cantors) has not been listed in the cited Bereavement Authority of Ontario's (BAO) policy, however, a local funeral home may decide to include clergy under this policy and **require proof of full vaccination** against COVID-19 **to enter funeral home premises.**

In lieu of proof of vaccination, a funeral home may direct clergy and church staff (i.e. cantors) to submit to antigen point of care testing for COVID-19 (rapid test) and demonstrate a negative result, at intervals to be determined by funeral home administration. Note that by opting for the rapid test you risk denial of admission, should your test result be positive.

As an alternative to the above, the clergy may choose to communicate in advance to the funeral home a willingness to conduct funeral services exclusively from church premises, where BAO/funeral home policies do not apply.