

VACCINE CREDENTIALS

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR CANADIAN MOSQUES

RATIONALE (1)

HIGH RISK PERSONS & COMMUNITIES

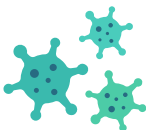


The mosque is an institutional pillar of the Canadian Muslim community and is integral to the spiritual and mental health of our communities. Many Canadian Muslims have high-risk medical conditions or live in hotspot COVID-19 regions, and within the community there are pockets with much lower rates of vaccination compared to the rest of Canada.



Houses of worship have been the sites of outbreaks and are established high-risk settings for spread of the virus.

4TH WAVE & VARIANTS



The 4th wave of the pandemic is being driven by a much more transmissible and likely more lethal variant of the virus. This unfortunately coincides with the reopening of schools and the upcoming fall and winter months, when more of us will gather indoors, further increasing the risk of spread.

VACCINES



The approved COVID-19 vaccines are *Halal* and have been shown to be overwhelmingly safe and effective in preventing severe illness and death. By now, the majority of Canadian Muslims have had an opportunity to get vaccinated.



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RATIONALE (2)



PRESERVING HEALTH

Preserving the health of the community is an individual and collective social responsibility. Ensuring all in attendance are vaccinated will provide an additional public health layer of protection, minimize the risk of outbreaks, promote vaccination rates, and protect those that cannot be vaccinated, such as our children.



SAFE SPACES & OPERATIONS

Making our mosques safer will make it easier for the elderly and most vulnerable to attend, who previously were not permitted or were fearful of attending. This will also reduce the risk of service interruptions due to outbreaks and potentially prevent lockdowns or allow for reduced restrictions down the line.



RIGHTS & FREEDOMS

Preserving the rights of the public in matters of health and safety over those of individuals are established Islamic, public health and legal principles. For example, the Ontario Human Rights Commission has stated that vaccine mandates are permissible with reasonable accommodations.



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RATIONALE (3)

PRECEDENCE



Vaccine mandates, where proof of vaccination is required before entry into high-risk public spaces, are being rolled out across the country and will be required in many aspects of our lives. The COVID-19 vaccines are also mandatory for performing *Hajj* and *Umrah*.

MAJORITY SUPPORT



Surveys have shown that 80% of Canadians support a vaccine mandate or credentials system. 75% of vaccinated Canadian Muslims also support this for our mosques.

ACCOMMODATIONS



For those unable to be fully vaccinated due to medical or eligibility reasons, reasonable accommodations exist. *Fiqh* bodies have already temporarily lifted any compulsion to pray at the mosque for the duration of the pandemic. Those unable or unwilling to attend in-person, may continue to benefit from virtual services.



The Canadian Council of Imams and the Fiqh Majlis of Canada have strongly recommended the COVID-19 vaccines for Canadian Muslims, support temporary mandates and have confirmed there are no valid religious exemptions.

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PREPARATION (4-6 WEEKS)

INFORM

- Inform all staff, employees, volunteers, and congregation about plans to require vaccine credentials, the rationale, and the proposed implementation plan, including effective date.
- Become familiar with your region's proof of vaccination implementation plan, including documents and apps used to show and confirm proof of vaccination.

EDUCATE

- Invite knowledgeable and trusted local Muslim physicians or health experts to discuss and answer questions about the COVID-19 vaccines or pandemic with your congregation at an upcoming Friday *Khutbah*.
- Distribute information regarding the COVID-19 vaccines, how to book vaccination appointments, and obtain official vaccine credentials from your provincial/local public health authority.

ASSIST

- Assist unvaccinated members in booking their vaccination appointments online or via telephone.
- Assist vaccinated members with obtaining their official vaccine credentials or proof of vaccination.



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CANADIAN MUSLIM COVID-19 TASK FORCE

VACCINE CREDENTIALS

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ROLL-OUT

RE-CONFIRM



Only accept official provincial or federal vaccination credential systems and documents, to maximize privacy and security.



Do not implement before the effective date of provincial vaccine mandates for access to other public spaces.



Ensure all mosque employees, volunteers and the congregation have had adequate time for preparation.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS



At entry, ask for paper or digital documentation. This may be a proof of vaccination record (14+ days since the second dose) or an official QR code that can be scanned.



No official ID confirmation required in addition to proof of vaccination for the following reasons:

- community members may be trusted to not falsify records to enter the mosque
- this places additional burden on those without valid official ID
- to minimize screening time at entry
- registration still requires names and contact information in case attendees need to be informed of an outbreak.



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ROLL-OUT

UNVACCINATED PERSONS



Those ineligible for vaccination (e.g. presently age under 12 years) may attend at the discretion of the mosque.

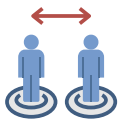


Those eligible, but unable to be vaccinated may attend by providing documentation of a valid medical exemption, typically from a licensed physician or nurse practitioner.



Those without a valid medical exemption and that are otherwise eligible for vaccination must show proof of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours (PCR) or 48 hours (rapid antigen test) of entry at their own cost.

REMINDERS



Other safety measures e.g. physical distancing, masking, and screening for symptoms or exposures should continue.



Well-fitted, multi-layered masks should be worn by all, at all times, while indoors.



Maximize ventilation within the mosque as a priority, as per previous guidance and public health recommendations.



Continue virtual services for those unable to attend.



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ROLL-OUT

FOLLOW UP



Follow-up regularly with the mosque safety & screening team and congregation to ensure issues, barriers, and concerns have been addressed.



Re-evaluate this temporary measure every 3 months. Once vaccine credentials are no longer required in public spaces or the pandemic is over, this requirement should be lifted.



Additional security should not be required for the majority of mosques with this implementation plan, however given recent events, mosque leadership are best positioned to decide if this may be required.

SUPPORT



Invite a Canadian Muslim physician or health expert to speak to your congregation regarding the COVID-19 vaccines.

Muslim Medical Association of Canada



covid@muslimmeds.ca



Questions regarding your implementation plan?

Canadian Muslim COVID-19 Task Force



cmccovidtf@gmail.com



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Maintaining community trust, safety and the sanctity of the mosque is paramount. With compassionate explanation, opportunities for education, facilitation of vaccination bookings, support from Islamic jurisprudence scholars and leaders, roll-out of vaccine credentials in many other aspects of our lives, reasonable accommodations, majority community support and vaccination uptake, and acceptance of other temporary allowances (e.g. masking and distancing during prayers), *InshaAllah* we have faith that the majority of the Canadian Muslim community will appreciate and support this endeavour to keep our mosques and communities healthy and safe during the pandemic.

We pray that Allah (*swt*) continues to guide us to make the right decisions in the best interests of our community, forgives us for our shortcomings and keeps us all healthy and safe.

Ameen.



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