

Are You Ready for Vaccine Verification?

Everything You Need to Know About the New King County Order
October 21, 2021



OneEastside
SPARK

*Center for Business
Resilience and Innovation*

Q&A Transcript

For hotels with larger meetings, conferences, and holiday events we understand we can designate the event planner as the person responsible for verifying vaccination. Is it possible for planners to verify in advance by having attendees email them a photo of their vaccination card, etc?

Yes, if the event planner can attest that they have checked vaccine verification, that is suitable.

Are testing facilities going to offer results in QR code format?

I believe most testing facilities have QR code as part of their result options. But not certain how different mobile apps operationalize that.

Regarding Booster - will the vaccine verification need to be re-done to confirm booster shot in the future? I am fitness studio owner that one-time verification and log and I have had members who have had their booster recently ask if I need to see it.

My answer is no, not at this time.

Is personal research data and conviction of harmful effects of vaccine enough from exemption?

There is no exemption for this verification order, but you can provide a negative test taken within 3 days of entering a venue requiring vaccine verification

We have many locations around the country, but I am eager to learn more about how our King County locations can successfully implement the Vaccination Verification Order

More to come here, but we do have public health professionals ready to support.

I have logged full vaccination prior to booster for members. In the future will a booster be required to be considered fully vaccinated?

At this time, there are no plans to require a booster as part of the verification so your current strategy should be good to go!

Am I required to check vaccination status at the door before someone enters my establishment?

No, not necessarily. If it is operationally easier to check verification at a table inside a restaurant for example, that is sufficient. We updated the order to clarify the language so that 'prior to entry' is not a requirement.

Is there a time limit for how long a person can be in my establishment before I need to check their vaccination status?

No, but a quick and limited purpose would be things like using the restroom, take-out, grab and go. Businesses can use their discretion if patrons are in the establishment for a long period of time.

Will I need to invest in special equipment to read the QR codes?

No. There are many methods of verification, QR codes is one way to do it and there are a variety of apps available if you are interested in that.



Q&A Transcript

How does this policy apply to nonprofits, which primarily serve members not the public? How can we implement these guidelines, even though we don't fall into one of these required businesses that has to comply?

The answer is yes, we would encourage any business who is interested in doing so. You could use the guidelines we've developed as a tool, even if it was not a mandatory requirement for your particular event or establishment.

There are many businesses currently short staffed, what advice do you have for those of us who are worried about how we might find the time to check vaccination status? On top of all the other things we need to get done.

We recognize it's an unrealistic expectation to think that establishments can hire someone to stand at the door to verify vaccinations. We have revised the order to remove the "prior to entry" language so you can operationalize it in a way that is most efficient for your business, while still following the intent of the order. For instance, if you're handing someone a menu, ask for proof of vaccination. We recognize there's a staffing shortage, so we encourage you to figure out how to empower your staff to ask the question within your normal flow of business.

What about hotel outlets, are we required to ask the guests every time they dine with us?

If you know that your guests are staying a week, you don't have to continuously ask them, one time is sufficient for this situation.

Are small retail businesses required to request proof of vaccine?

No, they are not. The KC Vax Verified Business Toolkit (www.kcvaxverified.com) has a handy chart of what businesses are included in the order and what are not.

For a small retail shop that does painted ceramics, where our customers are sitting together for a while, is this a category that's covered under the order?

This is technically not included in the order. I would emphasize that any business can choose to require vaccine verification certainly on their own if they feel that's an environment where it would be the healthiest thing for them to do.

We have a three-day event coming up soon. Should we verify vaccination proof every day? Or can we record each person's vaccination on the first day and not ask again?

This is a very common question, especially for conferences. You can just record everyone's vaccine info on the first day, that way, you don't have to continuously ask them, and then use your best discretion.

For gyms or membership organizations can we record somebody's vaccine status once and be compliant with the order?

Yes, you may record it in your system and as long as you're referencing it then it is sufficient for the Order.

There is a big group party being organized at my restaurant, am I responsible for vaccination confirmation in that case? Or is the host supposed to do it?

It would be the restaurant that is responsible, unless there is a contract of some kind. You could make it a part of the contract that they need to attest that they have checked everyone's verification.



Q&A Transcript

Are masks optional, now that we are asking for vaccination verifications?

No, at this time masks are still required. There are two mask orders right now, one at the state level and one at the county level. We are having conversations about trying to navigate this because we see some value in trying to create a space where masks would be optional under our vaccine verification order. But this is an ongoing conversation. If the state order is in place, the county order can be stricter, but the county cannot be less than whatever the state is requiring.

I work at a restaurant can I just record a customer's vaccine status once and not have to check it every time they come in?

Yes, we aren't requiring the tracking of customers vaccination info, but if you have a means of tracking this information for your regular customers much like a fitness center or club then yes. We do have the expectation that there is verification of vaccine for everyone in your space.

In our facility, we have a cafe with outdoor seating, indoor seating, as well as a garden to sit and enjoy. People often come in and out of the cafe and the garden is also an entry to our facility. How should we best track people for their proof of vaccination?

This is a tough one. My recommendation would be because outdoors is not part of the vaccine verification order, they can be dining outdoors without verification. Check vaccine verification for the individuals as they sit down indoors and are choosing to stay indoors to enjoy their food or drink.

With this vaccination mandate in place, can we close our windows as the temperatures start to decrease?

Our King County Health Officer Dr. Duchin feels very strongly about the importance of good ventilation. Part of the reason we are launching this order at this time of year is because we recognize that ventilation is not going to be as realistic during this time of year and people need to do what they can to create comfortable environments within their venues. That said, on behalf of Dr. Duchin any way that you can create more ventilation in your indoor spaces, whether that's your home or a restaurant he would certainly recommend that.

Should we be asking for proof of age when we see a child in the group of customers?

No, we have no requirements to check proof of age. It applies to people 12 and over, so if someone is coming in and you ask, for example are you 12? If the answer is a yes, and they've just started getting their vaccination, but they've not completed their second shot, that child should still be allowed into the venue. There is language in the FAQs that state if an adult is with a child and they attest to the fact that yes, they are getting their vaccination, by all means you could let that child in into the venue.

Is there a resource we can refer to for proof of vaccinations from outside the United States to confirm they are real and not fake?

We don't have photos of every international vaccine verification, but we do have some examples. Please try and assume good intent if someone says this is my vaccination card from wherever they are from.

Should I ask my employees to show vaccination proofs every day as well?

This order does not cover employees, so that is not necessary.

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What are some of the best strategies to politely deny service to unvaccinated customers who don't have a negative COVID-19 test?

We recommend referencing the fact that this is a Public Health Order. If they're not willing to show proof of vaccination or proof of a negative COVID test, then you can't serve them in indoors. Please first try alternatives: is there a different way we can serve you, can we get you some takeout? Can we sit you outside? Then if they're not accepting any of the options at some point, you'll have to say "due to the Public Health Order, we're not going to be able to accommodate you at this time."

Is this applicable to indoor sporting events? Like my kids high school basketball game?

If it is happening at a school on the school grounds, it would not be covered under this order. Only community centers, aquatic centers, recreational centers, things of that nature.

Are the public education campaign, social media messages and graphics available so we can share on our social media channels?

There are a ton on our www.kingcounty.gov/verify website, and I can also share some additional signage that you can use as your business. Please email me Taylor Gaston at tgaston@kingcounty.gov.

How is this mandate being implemented? Is it possible for customers to complain somehow, if there is a business that is not in compliance with this new policy?

All of the signage has the number to contact King County (206) 477-3977. Our customer service team is available to respond and we're working in partnership with the City of Seattle as well.

Would an indoor mall need to provide verification prior to entry in the mall or would that be left to the individual tenants?

No. If there are businesses within the mall that fall under the order, then those tenants would need to do the vaccine verification. Food courts in malls are not covered under the order

My restaurant is on the ground floor of a corporate building. And the seating area is often used by employees from other businesses in the building, even if they are not my customers. Does this policy apply to me?

The question is if it's an actual restaurant with walls around it, then answer is yes. If the seating area is not dedicated to the restaurant, then no.

There is a faith-based event happening soon in my restaurant along with dinner for 60 people. Am I responsible for verifying vaccinations in this case?

If it is a faith-organization, they are not required to show proof of vaccination even if it's in your restaurant and this goes for any faith-based organization wherever they are.

At my business, employees are scared that we will be penalized for not following the mandate in case we approve fake vaccination cards by mistake. How should I train them? Are there specific things we should be looking for in the vaccination card?

It's not on the business to check the validity of the vaccination card. We're assuming best intentions when we ask people for proof of vaccination and if they show something that looks valid, accept it and move on to the to the next customer. King County has been very clear the focus is education first -- we want to make sure that people feel safe prior to escalating to enforcement.

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My colleague owns a winery and they are wondering if events like wine tasting will come under this policy?

Yes, this would be treated the same as a bar or a restaurant or anywhere where a mask is removed indoors when eating or drinking.

A conference is happening in my establishment followed by a dinner, are the customers supposed to be asked for vaccines before or after the conference?

Vaccine verification should be checked for the conference, so you won't need to recheck for the dinner that follows.

I cannot seem to find the MyIR app on Apple App Store- it does not come up in search. Is it there or are there issues with it now? Or is it me.

Go to www.myirmobile.com to get to the site. Please note there are some wrinkles that are still getting worked out on the program.

Why does this mandate not apply to flight travel people sit so close to each other eating and are without masks?

That is outside of the jurisdiction and scope of King County.

There are indoor malls that are planning to have festivities and small events for Halloween in the general area of the mall, not inside the stores, will the mall owner need to check vaccination status prior to entry in the mall, even though many patrons are there simply to shop and not attend the events?

No, because this is a transitory environment and participants will be wearing their masks for the event.

Why are employees not supposed to be mandatorily vaccinated?

Employees are covered under different programs. The Federal government has an order out related to employees, the State Labor and Industries has guidelines related to employees for COVID infections. So, we are leaving that one to the federal and state government to figure out.

How about people who have who were vaccinated in March? Will the expiration of cards be considered soon?

Our hope is we will reconsider this order in six months or sooner. If public health and our public health officer is seeing trends that make him feel we don't need this order in place anymore, we will lift the order. There's no intent for this to be permanent. Obviously, the evolution of the COVID-19 variants is something that will be considered, but hopefully we will not need to address the expiration of cards.

If there are updates to the order after it launches on October 25, how do we stay informed? Is there a mailing list we can subscribe to for updates?

Yes, the www.kcvaxverified.com resource site has an area where you can sign up for our mailing list to receive updates on the order.