



St. Thomas Site
Administrative Office
1230 Talbot Street
St. Thomas, ON
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Woodstock Site
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Woodstock, ON
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October 6, 2021 (Revised October 14th 2021)

To: All Owners, Operators and Persons Responsible for facilities located in Elgin County, Oxford County, and the City of St. Thomas used for indoor organized sports

Re: Southwestern Public Health Proof of Vaccination Instructions for Owners / Operators of Facilities used for organized sport

Issued by: Dr. Joyce Lock, Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health

Effective Date of Implementation: 12:01AM Sunday, October 31, 2021, until further notice unless otherwise specified

I am writing to notify all owners/operators of the above facilities of your responsibilities outlined below. I would also like to thank you for your ongoing support in protecting the health of those who enter multi-use recreational facilities within the Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) region as we continue to endure this pandemic.

Similar to other communities across Ontario, Southwestern Public Health is experiencing a fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic due to an increase in cases of the more contagious Delta (B.1.617.2) variant. Adherence to the instructions outlined in this letter will assist our collective efforts by reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission during high-risk activities that occur in organized sporting venues and recreational centers.

Activities related to organized sports have the potential to enhance COVID-19 transmission. Specifically, close contact, forceful exhalation, prolonged exposure, crowded indoor spaces and masks or face coverings removed during physical activity contribute to the enhanced likelihood of COVID-19 transmission. Verifying proof of vaccination for persons 12 years and older in the facilities noted above, according to this Letter of Instruction, will strengthen protections for the SWPH community by helping curb the spread of COVID-19.

As of October 5, 2021, 81.2% of all residents aged 12 and over in the SWPH region have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and 67.9% of youth aged 12-17 are now fully immunized. Our COVID-19 vaccine clinics in St. Thomas, Woodstock, as well as many pop-up clinics across the region, remain open for those who are eligible and wish to be vaccinated.

I, Dr. Joyce Lock, as the Medical Officer of Health for Southwestern Public Health, am issuing instructions pursuant to Schedule 1, Section 2 (2.1) of Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for areas in Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step of the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020 c. 17. Where this Letter of Instruction imposes an additional requirement not set out in the *Reopening Ontario Act*, the requirement under this Letter of Instruction must be followed.

Those aged between 12 and 17 who participate in organized sports are currently eligible to be immunized against COVID-19 but are not included in provincial proof-of-vaccination requirements. Adding this requirement for this group will help prevent cases of COVID-19 which may result in serious negative outcomes, or spread to others who are at higher risk.

All Owners, Operators and Persons Responsible for facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities located in the Southwestern Public Health service area are instructed to:

1. Require each person, age 12 years and older, at the point of entry, who attends the indoor area of the Facility for the purpose of
 - a) actively participating in organized sports,
 - b) coaching, officiating, or volunteering at organized sports, or
 - c) spectating at organized sports,to provide identification and proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or a valid medical exemption.
2. Develop and implement a COVID-19 vaccination policy for your facility staff, contractors and/or subcontractors and volunteers that follows the [Letter of Recommendation](#) issued by Southwestern Public Health for workplaces and employers.
3. Comply with all other requirements under the [Reopening Ontario Act](#) and its regulations that apply to the Facility.

These instructions do not apply to a person who is entering an indoor area solely for the following purposes:

1. to use a washroom;
2. to access an outdoor area that can only be accessed through an indoor route;
3. while paying for an order;
4. to purchase admission; or
5. as may be necessary for the purposes of health and safety including an emergency.
6. These instructions also do not apply to youth born in 2010 or later who are not yet eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Youth who are 11 years of age turning 12 in 2022 will have an eight-week grace period from the time they become eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to show proof of vaccination to enter sport and recreation facilities.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these instructions:

- **“Facility”** means a facility located in Elgin County, Oxford County, or the City of St. Thomas where organized sports are played and/or practiced.

- “**Fully Vaccinated**” means a person has received the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or any combination of such vaccines, one or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada; and they received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago.
- “**Owner/Operator**” means an owner/operator of a facility located in Elgin County, Oxford County or the City of St. Thomas where organized sports are played and/or practiced.
- “**Organized Sport(s)**” means sport(s) and recreation including, but not limited to, sports leagues, organized pick-up sports, fitness classes, dance classes, gymnastics, martial arts, and swimming classes, or as otherwise described in the Ministry of Health’s [Proof of Vaccination Guidance](#) for Businesses and Organizations under the *Reopening Ontario Act*.

ENFORCEMENT

You are required to comply with the additional measures above, pursuant to regulations under the *Reopening Ontario Act*, including any successor legislation or regulations.

As per the *Reopening Ontario Act*, individuals who do not comply with the above-noted requirements may be liable for a fine up to a maximum of \$100,000 or, in the case of a corporation, not more than \$10,000,000 for each day or part of each day on which the offence occurs or continues.

The Letter of Instruction was developed in consultation with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health as prescribed by the Ontario Regulation 364/20: RULES FOR AREAS AT STEP 3 AND AT THE ROADMAP EXIT STEP.

Inquiries about these instructions should be directed to Southwestern Public Health at: communications@swpublichealth.ca.

Yours truly,



Dr. Joyce Lock
Medical Officer of Health
Southwestern Public Health