



## Your Vaccination and Pandemic Resource Partner

**Date:** November 18, 2021

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues its pervasive impact on the world, employers are facing unique challenges on all fronts: health and safety, human rights and accommodation, privacy and data security, workplace safety and insurance, pensions and benefits. Hicks Morley has the expertise to guide employers through any pandemic-related labour and employment issues that may arise.

### Updates

We are continuously monitoring developments and sending communications to our clients with the latest information and impacts on the workplace.

- See our [checklist for a successful return to work in a COVID-19 world](#).
- See our [vaccination articles](#).
- See our [COVID-19 articles](#).

Be sure to follow us on [Twitter](#) and subscribe to receive updates by [email](#) or [RSS](#).

### Services

Hicks Morley places the highest priority on client service. We have used our expertise to help our clients navigate countless pandemic-related challenges and we are prepared to help manage whatever comes next. We can:

- keep you apprised of all of the latest government measures and ensure you understand how they affect your business,
- identify your legal obligations in the workplace,
- help create vaccine mandates,
- identify your health and safety obligations, both in terms of ensuring a safe physical workspace and ensuring the health and safety of your employees,
- assist you with obligations relating to statutory leaves,
- review your work-from-home and hybrid-work policies,
- guide you through the statutory benefits that may be available to employees and assist in interpreting other benefit plans that you may have
- advise on benefits issues relating to re-enrollment requirements, waiting periods and insurance and disability coverage,
- help you manage absenteeism through the development of contingency plans
- help you assess the privacy implications of a positive diagnosis in the workplace and navigate the collection of

medical information, and

- work with you on various human rights and accommodation issues—including family status—that may arise.

## Proof of Vaccination

Individuals in Ontario are required to provide proof of being fully vaccinated in order to access [designated public settings](#) and must show their enhanced COVID-19 vaccine certificate with QR code as proof of vaccination, as well as a piece of identification.

Verify Ontario is the only authorized app for businesses and organizations to confirm eligibility of patrons to enter prescribed settings. Businesses and organizations are responsible for ensuring they meet the requirements regarding proof of identification and proof of vaccination against COVID-19.

## Going Forward

On October 22, 2021, the [Ontario government announced](#) its long-term plan for easing COVID-19-related measures, with the aim of lifting all restrictions by March 2022. The plan, which began by lifting capacity limits and distancing requirements in certain settings on October 25, 2021, identifies a number of milestones dependent on the absence of concerning trends in public health and health care:

- *November 15, 2021* ([currently on pause](#)): Lift capacity limits in higher-risk settings where proof of vaccination is required, including food or drink establishments with dance facilities (e.g., nightclubs, wedding receptions in meeting/event spaces where there is dancing).
- *January 17, 2022*: Begin gradually lifting limits in settings where proof of vaccination is not required. The Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) will lift CMOH directives, as appropriate. Proof of vaccination requirements may begin to be gradually lifted (e.g., for restaurants and bars, sports and recreational facilities, and bingo halls).
- *February 7, 2022*: Lift proof of vaccination requirements in high-risk settings (e.g., night clubs).
- *March 28, 2022*: Lift remaining public health and workplace safety measures, including wearing face coverings in indoor public settings (subject to any recommendations released for specific settings). Proof of vaccination would be lifted for all remaining settings, including meeting and event spaces, sporting events, concerts, theatres and cinemas.

## Government Resources

For more information on further information on COVID-19, please see:

- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) (24-hour hotline: 800.454.8302)
- [Ontario Ministry of Health: COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario](#)
- Government of Canada [Employment and Social Development Canada \(COVID-19\)](#)

## The Hicks Morley Advantage

Hicks Morley has been advising employers for almost 50 years. In addition to our ongoing experience with the COVID-19 pandemic, we advised employers on pandemic planning during the SARS crisis in 2003 and the H1N1 scare in 2009. We have the expertise and can help you prepare for any eventuality. We understand your business and we have the expertise and the depth to assist you in navigating the unique issues relating to COVID-19, vaccine mandates and the return to work.

As recognized leaders in the areas of employment and labour law, Hicks Morley is well-positioned to assist you in understanding your compliance obligations, developing return-to-work plans and managing the health and safety of your



workforce.