

Rugby Ontario COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Policy

Introduction

Rugby Ontario is committed to providing and maintaining a safe competitive environment for all. Accordingly, Rugby Ontario has agreed, in conjunction with Rugby Canada and other provincial unions, to implement a Mandatory Vaccination Policy for all Rugby Ontario participants. This policy requires that, in accordance with the terms set out below, all persons subject to this policy be vaccinated for COVID-19 or obtain an approved exemption.

This policy complies with the general measures and recommendations to help combat the spread of COVID-19 as established by Public Health Canada and by provincial health authorities. However, additional safety policies may be applied based on local requirements.

Rugby Ontario wishes to take reasonable precautions in the circumstances to protect the health and safety of both the rugby community and the public. This policy is mandatory for all participants involved in Rugby Ontario Sanctioned Activities.

1. General Comments

- 1.1 Participant includes players, coaches, social members, team staff, match officials, and volunteers who are involved in Rugby Ontario Sanctioned Activities.
- 1.2 Sanctioned Activity means any game, on-field practice, outdoor or indoor training, training and education courses or any other activity involving Participants that is approved, sanctioned or hosted by Rugby Ontario.
- 1.3 All Participants taking part in the Sanctioned Activity must follow all guidelines indicated in this policy. Failure to comply will lead to denial of entry or removal from the Sanctioned Activity.
- 1.4 Rugby Ontario reserves the right to pursue additional discipline if appropriate in the circumstances.
- 1.5 Provincial and regional COVID health orders as well as facility operator health and safety protocols must be followed at all Rugby Ontario Sanctioned Activities. This includes, but is not limited to required COVID testing, limitation in the number of Participants in the venue, daily health attestations, mask mandates, social distancing mandates and other such measures required by health authorities. If any provincial, or regional health order or policy of a facility exceed the minimum requirements of this Policy, those orders supersede this Policy, and all Participants must abide by the requirements set out in those orders or policies.

- 1.6 Rugby Ontario reserves the rights to apply additional health and safety policies than those mandated by government and/or the sport venue at its sole discretion.

2. Implementation

- 2.1 All Participants must be fully vaccinated by November 15, 2021, subject to any approved exemptions.
- 2.2 “Fully vaccinated” means the required doses of a Health Canada approved vaccine.
- 2.3 A Participant is fully vaccinated if their second dose has been administered no later than two weeks prior to the first day of the Sanctioned Activity.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of a Participant to ensure that they receive the required doses of a COVID vaccine by November 15, 2021.

3. Policy for Participants at Sanctioned Activities

- 3.1 All Participants wishing to participate in Sanctioned Activities must provide proof of full vaccination.
- 3.2 Participants under 12 years of age do not have to provide proof of full vaccination but must still comply with all other applicable Health Orders and Rugby Ontario’s Return to Play Plan.
- 3.3 If Rugby Ontario is uncertain whether a Participant is under 12 years of age, Rugby Ontario may request that the Participant provide acceptable proof of their age.
- 3.4 All Participants who turn 12 years of age after this policy comes into effect are required to be fully vaccinated with an accepted COVID-19 vaccine within eight (8) weeks of the Participant turning 12 years of age.
- 3.5 If the age eligibility for COVID vaccination changes while this policy is in effect, any Participants newly eligible to receive a vaccination will have eight (8) weeks to become fully vaccinated.
- 3.6 Participants who cannot provide proof of vaccination will not be permitted to participate in any Rugby Ontario Sanctioned Activities under any circumstances unless they have received written approval from Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario.
- 3.7 Proof of vaccination MUST be verified prior to the start of the Sanctioned Activity unless a Participant has submitted a request under Section 4.
 1. Proof can be in the form of a valid provincial proof of vaccination documentation.

2. A Participant must present their identification and proof of vaccination, in person, to be verified by a club COVID Safety Officer or their designate. A Participant must present this information before **every** Sanctioned Activity.
 3. A Participant who is unable to provide proof of vaccination before the Sanctioned Activity may not participate, even if they have previously presented proof of vaccination.
 4. Member Clubs are responsible for verifying whether a Participant associated with their club has the required proof of vaccination. If a Participant associated with a member club is involved in rugby activity without valid proof of vaccination, the club will be subject to discipline as deemed appropriate by Rugby Ontario.
 5. If a Participant is attending Sanctioned Activities held indoors and they are required by provincial health authorities or facility policy to provide proof of vaccination when entering the facility, Member Clubs are not required to verify Participant proof of vaccination for a second time.
 6. Member Clubs must contact facility operators in advance to confirm the proof of vaccination requirements that are in place for any facility they intend to use for Sanctioned Activities.
 7. Rugby Ontario will only collect, use, and disclose information regarding a Participant's vaccination status in accordance with all applicable privacy laws.
- 3.8 Failure to submit proof of vaccination by the required deadline will result in the immediate withdrawal of the participant and/or team from the Sanctioned Activity.
- 3.9 No refund will be provided.
- 3.10 Rugby Ontario is committed to creating a safe, positive, and inclusive environment in which all Participants can participate in sport and are treated with respect and fairness. Rugby Ontario has a zero-tolerance policy for any intimidating and/or inflammatory behaviour and comments from Participants (and their parents/guardians) towards any member of Rugby Ontario or member clubs who are requesting information or enforcing the terms of this policy. Any abusive behaviour and harassment will be reported, and the Participant may be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Exemptions

- 4.1 If an individual is unable to receive a vaccination due to a medical condition or other grounds protected by applicable provincial human rights legislation, the Participant may seek approval to attend an/or participate in Sanctioned Activities without proof of vaccination.
- 4.2 Generally, there is no requirement under provincial human rights legislation to accommodate a refusal to be vaccinated arising from a political belief and/or principle. Political belief, such as the objection to receiving the vaccination on a principled basis, is not a protected ground under this legislation.
- 4.3 This process is a shared responsibility. The Participant must co-operatively engage in the process, share information with Rugby Canada, including answering reasonable questions asked by Rugby Canada, and/or provide information about relevant restrictions or limitations, and consider potential solutions.
- 4.4 Requests must be submitted in writing to Rugby Canada covidexemptions@rugby.ca allowing at least two weeks for requests to be considered. This request must include documentation supporting the Participant's position that they are exempted from receiving a COVID vaccination.
 - a. A Participant who is requesting an exemption from this policy based on a medical condition must submit a letter from a physician, clearly stating the reason why the Participant should be exempted from receiving the vaccine. This letter will be considered information in the consideration of the exemption and does not constitute, in and of itself, an exemption.
 - b. A Participant who is requesting an exemption on religious belief or creed must provide materials in support of the Participant's religious belief or creed, including a letter of support from a religious leader or community. This letter will be considered information in the consideration of the exemption and does not constitute, in and of itself, an exemption.
- 4.5 Rugby Canada will confirm receipt of the Accommodation/Exemption Request. An original copy of the request email will be securely stored.
- 4.6 Rugby Canada will consult with a committee of subject-matter experts as deemed necessary to determine whether the exemption, will be granted based on the process set out below. If additional information is required from the Participant, the Rugby Canada will follow up.

- 4.7 By applying for an exemption, a Participant consents to their application and supporting documentation being shared and reviewed by Rugby Canada and any subject-matter experts to whom Rugby Canada may refer the application and supporting documentation as part of considering the Participant's exemption request.
- 4.8 Rugby Canada may grant or refuse the exemption request, but it must render a decision. Rugby Canada may also grant the exemption request with conditions, such as weekly proof of a negative COVID test, masking, and social distancing.
- 4.9 The decision of Rugby Canada is final.

5. Spectators

- 5.1 Rugby Ontario is not extending the requirements of this policy to spectators at the present time. However, spectators must follow the guidelines and requirements as established by public health authorities with respect to vaccination requirements to attend events.
- 5.2 Spectators must follow the health and safety policies of any venue hosting a Sanctioned Activity.
- 5.3 Further, Rugby Ontario reserves the right to implement a vaccine mandate as a condition of continued spectator involvement, if necessary, in the future.

6. Return to Play Policies

- 6.1 Rugby Ontario's Return to Play policies remain in effect and must be followed by all Participants.
- 6.2 Rugby Canada's Return to Play Medical Committee may have to add, change, or update health and safety these policies as necessary.

7. Modification and Expiry

- 7.1 Rugby Ontario reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time as circumstances change.
- 7.2 This Policy shall remain in effect until further notice.

[END]

Version Control:

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