

BC GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTS CHANGES TO COVID-19 GUIDELINES: MASKS, PROOF OF VACCINATION

By Sandra Guarascio + Sabrina Anis

On March 10, 2022, the BC provincial government [announced certain changes to its COVID-19-related restrictions](#). As of March 11, the provincial health order requiring face coverings (i.e. masks) was repealed, except as it applies to schools.¹ Other measures announced include an easing of the requirement that faith communities restrict attendance based on vaccination status, and the requirements applying to overnight camps for children and youth.

In addition, the Provincial Health Officer announced the forthcoming lifting of other protective measures. Specifically, the government announced its intention to lift the BC vaccine card proof of vaccination requirement on **April 8, 2022**,² and to make changes relating to visitors to long-term care facilities by **March 18, 2022**.

In conjunction with the foregoing changes, the provincial government repealed and replaced its workplace safety order made on February 16, 2022. The revised workplace safety order will apply between now and **April 8, 2022**, and provides:

- An employer must maintain its COVID-19 safety plan; however, the revised order removes the requirement that COVID-19 safety plans require workers in indoor common areas to wear face coverings (and all related requirements);
- A worker must wear a face covering if required to do so by an employer in fulfillment of the employer's obligation to put in place measures and reduce the risk to workers from communicable disease; and,
- An employer must permit a worker to wear a face covering if the worker chooses to do so.

The government has stated that following April 8, 2022 employers will no longer be required to have a COVID-19 safety plan, but will be subsequently required to follow communicable disease prevention guidance from WorkSafeBC.

While the province has affirmed that individual businesses can choose to continue requiring masks and proof of vaccination on their premises, in light of the changes to provincial requirements it is no longer mandatory that businesses maintain such requirements. There are a multitude of considerations organizations should keep in mind in tailoring their COVID-19 safety/communicable disease plans to their workplace including any policies related to vaccination or rapid testing.

¹ i.e. to school students, school staff members, and visitors to school spaces. The mask requirements applying to schools will subsequently be repealed following students' return from spring break. For a list of spring break dates by school district, visit the province's website [here](#)

² Requirements applying to post-secondary institution residential housing will also be repealed on April 8, 2022.



Please [contact a member of the Roper Greyell team](#) if you have questions about how these changes might impact your operations.

View the province's March 10, 2022 news release [here](#) and additional information about provincial restrictions [here](#). See WorkSafeBC's news release [here](#).

Navigating COVID-19 in the Workplace

For further information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and how it may impact your workplace, please look to our previous bulletins. They can be found on the [Roper Greyell COVID-19 resource page](#).

This bulletin is current to the morning of **March 14, 2022**, but the pandemic and the responses of the federal and provincial governments continue to evolve, and this may impact the accuracy of the information set out here. If in doubt about whether anything in this document is still current, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

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