

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) provides independent oversight and enforcement of BC's access and privacy laws, including the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) and the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA). This document explains how the [BC Vaccine Card](#) (Card) and the Public Health Orders (Orders) work together with these laws. The Orders require individuals seeking to enter certain higher-risk social and recreational events to show their proof of vaccination against COVID-19. To facilitate this, the government is giving each vaccinated individual their proof of vaccination in the form of their own unique Quick Response (QR) code. Think of it like a driver's license, or any other piece of government-issued ID, and **protect it accordingly**.

## 1. What is the legal authority for the Card?

BC's privacy laws authorize the collection of personal information in several circumstances including if it is required by law. The Orders, in this case, are made under the [Public Health Act](#) and they have the force of law.

## 2. My Card is on my smartphone. Should I restrict access to my phone by requiring a passcode to unlock it?

The OIPC strongly recommends you require a passcode to unlock your smartphone or use biometric recognition. If you don't, then anyone who picks it up can scan your Card – and see everything else on your smartphone.

## 3. Are organizations entitled to ask me for my vaccine status for entry and do I have to provide it?

Yes, organizations subject to the Orders must ask, and you must provide, your proof of vaccination for entry in accordance with the Orders.

## 4. Is there more information on the Card than what organizations see when they scan it using the BC Vaccine Card Verifier app?

Yes. The Card contains your full name, your date of birth, the date you received your vaccine(s), where you received your vaccines, what types of vaccine(s) you received, the lot number of the vaccine(s), and a digital signature to prove the QR code is authentic. However, the BC Vaccine Card Verifier app is designed to reveal **only** your name and vaccine status. Under the Orders, organizations are **not** permitted to use any other app that could disclose all of the information on the Card; if they do, you can complain to our Office. The reason the Card contains information beyond your name and vaccine status is to facilitate its future use for such matters as international travel.

**5. Can an organization record my status so I do not need to show proof next time I visit?**

Yes, **but** only if you provide written consent authorizing them to. They are not allowed to take a picture of it though, even if you consent.

**6. Does the government keep a record of when, where, or how many times I have shown my Card?**

No. The BC Vaccine Card Verifier App checks for a public key against the embedded digital signature to verify that the QR code is authentic, but the government does not keep a log or otherwise record who, when, where, or how many times someone uses a Card.

**7. I don't think I should be forced to disclose my vaccine status; can I submit a privacy complaint?**

It is the law that for specified activities you must show your Card. If you believe your information is being collected in a way that is not in accordance with the Orders, then you must first attempt to resolve your complaint with the organization. If you haven't received a response within 30 days or are not satisfied with the response, you may then complain to our Office. You must clearly explain when you complain why you believe an organization is doing something that is not in accordance with the Orders.

**8. I want to post my Card online to show everyone that I am vaccinated. Is that okay?**

You really shouldn't do it. Although FIPPA and PIPA do not apply to what private individuals do with their own information, keep in mind the card discloses things about you. You wouldn't normally flash your driver's license or Social Insurance Number around. Treat your Card the same way. Our Office strongly advises against posting your Card online or sharing it with others in order to protect your personal privacy. If you post or share your Card, then anyone who has it can see everything that is on it, so it is best to keep it in a safe place.

*These guidelines are for information purposes only and do not constitute a decision or finding by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia. These guidelines do not affect the powers, duties, or functions of the Information and Privacy Commissioner regarding any complaint, investigation, or other matter under FIPPA or PIPA.*