



DM Vaccination Certification call

March 19, 2021, 16:30 to 17:30, teleconference.

Objective

Discuss pan-Canadian approach to vaccination certification to facilitate both inbound and outbound travellers.

Run of Show

- PCO has convened an interdepartmental call on Vaccination Certification.
- No agenda has been provided.

Key Messages

Vaccination Certification

- My department is tracking this file closely as it has the potential to impact bilateral, multilateral and trade priorities across the department. Expectations are growing from industry, airlines, and other governments for the GoC to clarify an approach.
- Vaccination certification could unlock international travel. Would be a key piece to re-enabling business travel (pressure from auto and aerospace industries).
- GAC supports the idea of an interim solution using a tool like ArriveCAN followed by a more permanent solution interoperable with an international standard.
- Need to clarify on an urgent basis how returning vaccinated Canadians (e.g. snowbirds) will be handled.
- We also need to find a solution to facilitate outbound international travel by Canadians, including senior-level government representatives. Vaccination certification could help to facilitate.
- Pressure is expected from the U.S. and other countries to reopen, particularly from countries where vaccine rollouts are more advanced.
- Want to ensure Canada is engaged in international standard-setting at WHO and other forums.
- The department stands ready to engage in discussions with key partners as required to lay the groundwork to re-establish cross-border travel.

Context

- A proof of vaccination credential/certification is an authoritative digital or physical document to demonstrate that a person has been vaccinated against COVID-19. Governments and international bodies (e.g. WHO, IATA, ICAO) are exploring the use of vaccination certificates as one tool to support the re-opening of societies and economies. [REDACTED]
- As countries begin to explore options to enable increased mobility and other privileges to vaccinated people, Canadian decisions in this context will be based on science. It is not yet known whether COVID-19 vaccines prevent virus transmission – a credential would not be a 'silver bullet' for replacing other public health measures at this time.
- There is currently no pan-Canadian proof of vaccination framework. Expectations are growing for Canada to clarify an approach given the global push to set the norms that will shape international travel. This is a challenging space in the Canadian context given the shared responsibilities on health issues with PTs.
- A weekly interdepartmental ADM committee led by Health Canada has been established to consider policy and operational aspects of developing a pan-Canadian approach (NGM represents GAC). The committee is currently considering a two-track approach to satisfy immediate-term pressures, as well



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as establish a longer-term digital solution that would be interoperable internationally. [REDACTED]

- In the short term, the existing ArriveCAN app may be leveraged. The idea is that an incoming traveller would download the app (already a requirement for most travellers), snap a photo of their vaccination papers and upload them. The photo would be paired with the traveller's ID, which is linked to their passport data. A QR code would be generated to show the Border Services Officer on arrival. This is described as a "low fidelity" approach, but one which avoids paper-based processes at the border. It could to satisfy immediate term pressures while a longer-term digital solution is being developed. [REDACTED]
- Longer term, Canada would seek to develop a digital system that would be fully interoperable with other countries' systems and WHO standards – one which would facilitate vaccinated Canadian's return and future outbound travel. This is particularly important as countries are starting to reopen their economies as vaccination rates increase. In this vein, vaccination certification is closely linked to the reopening framework discussions, led by the Health portfolio. Under this framework, Health/PHAC is considering a phased approach to allow travellers with proof of vaccination greater "privileges" upon arrival. For example, in the future, travellers who can prove they have received a recognized vaccine could see a reduced quarantine period. These discussions are still very active.
- Note also that IRCC looking at the passport program and working with ICAO and other stakeholders to understand how existing systems and technology could be leveraged longer-term. IRCC emphasizes this work is in early days and is complex. Potential legal and privacy challenges with respect to vaccination certification and collecting traveller data are recognized.

**Pages 3 to / à 11
are withheld pursuant to section
sont retenues en vertu de l'article**

69(1)(e)

**of the Access to Information Act
de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information**



DM Vaccination Certification call

March 26, 2021, 13:00-14:00 (TBC) teleconference.

Objective

Discuss pan-Canadian approach to vaccination certification to facilitate inbound and outbound travel.

Run of Show

- PCO has convened a call on vaccination certification.
- No formal agenda has been provided; discussion will likely focus on deck proposed for COVID committee discussion March 30.

Key Messages

- Expectations are growing for Canada to clarify an approach given the global push to set the norms that will shape international travel for years to come.
- Department is tracking this file closely given the potential to impact bilateral, multilateral and trade priorities. Expectations are growing from industry, airlines, and other governments (examples: [REDACTED] for the GoC to clarify an approach.
- GAC supports the idea of an interim solution using a tool like ArriveCAN for incoming travellers, followed by a more permanent solution interoperable with an international standard.
- Vaccination certification could be a key piece to re-enabling cross-border travel, including business travel (particular pressure from auto and aerospace industries).
- Pressure is expected from the [REDACTED] and other countries to reopen, particularly from countries where vaccine rollouts are more advanced.
- Need to come together to find a solution to facilitate international travel by Canadians, including senior government representatives, as vaccinations become more prevalent. s.69(1)(g)re(c)
- GoC will need to move fast on a solution for outbound travel in order to keep pace. [REDACTED]
- GAC stands ready to engage in discussions with key partners in Canada and abroad as required to lay the groundwork to re-establish cross-border travel.

Context

- A proof of vaccination credential/certification (PVC) is a digital or physical document to demonstrate that a person has received a COVID-19 vaccination. Canada does not currently have a framework for recognising or issuing PVCs. [REDACTED] s.69(1)(g)re(e)
- [REDACTED]
- The interim approach is likely to leverage the existing ArriveCAN app. The idea is that an incoming traveller would download the app (already a requirement for most travellers), snap a photo of their vaccination papers and upload. The photo would be paired with the traveller's ID, which is linked to their passport. A QR code would be generated to show the Border Services Officer on arrival. This is described as a "low fidelity" approach, but one which avoids paper-based processes at the border. It could satisfy immediate term pressures while a longer-term solution is being developed.
- [REDACTED]



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s.21(1)(b)

- In this way, PVC is closely linked to the reopening framework discussions, also led by the Health portfolio. Under this framework, Health/PHAC is considering a phased approach to allow travellers with proof of vaccination greater “privileges” upon arrival. For example, in the future, travellers who can prove they have received a recognized vaccine might see a reduced quarantine period or different testing requirements. These discussions are still very active.
- IRCC is looking at the passport program and working with ICAO and other stakeholders to understand how existing systems and technology could be leveraged longer-term. IRCC emphasizes this work is in early days and is complex. Potential legal, ethical and privacy challenges are recognized. A weekly interdepartmental ADM committee led by PHAC has been established to coordinate a pan-Canadian approach (NGM represents GAC).
- **International Overview:**
 - Governments and international bodies (e.g. WHO, IATA, ICAO) are exploring the use of vaccination certificates as one tool to support the re-opening of societies and economies. Countries including Israel and Denmark have already approached Canada about mutual recognition of vaccine certification.
 - According to the latest PHAC data, approximately 30 countries either recognize or have announced they plan to recognize proof of vaccination for inbound travellers. Proof of vaccination in most instances could exempt travellers from testing and/or quarantine requirements. Countries planning to introduce PVCs in spring 2021 include Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Israel, Singapore and Sweden among others. The EU is planning on introducing an EU-wide pass in coming months. Work is ongoing at PHAC to monitor international developments.
 - As countries begin to explore options to enable increased mobility and other privileges for vaccinated people, Canadian decisions in this context will be based on science. It is not yet known whether COVID-19 vaccines prevent virus transmission – a credential would not be a ‘silver bullet’ for replacing other public health measures at this time.