

**Subject:** Covid-19 Updates - August 26, 2021 - Mask Mandate Returns  
**Date:** Thursday, August 26, 2021 at 3:06:10 PM Pacific Daylight Time  
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**Attachments:** image001.jpg, image002.jpg

We hope everyone is enjoying their summer, especially now that the heat wave has passed and the air quality has improved. Our thanks to all the staff and caregivers who have helped people to stay cool and safe through the summer, and to get out and spend time safely with family and friends.

We also want to thank everyone who has followed the public health advice to get fully vaccinated against Covid-19. With case counts again on the rise, vaccination is critical to stopping the spread and preventing serious illness for those who are most at risk.

There have been a number of public health announcements this week:

1. **Proof of Vaccination** – starting September 13, proof of vaccination will be required to access some events, services and businesses. This requirement will apply to everyone, the only exception will be for children under the age of 12. For more information, please refer the BC Government website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof>.



2. **Mask Mandate** – as of today, August 25, masks will once again be mandatory in indoor public spaces, including:
  - a. Shopping centres, coffee shops and retail and grocery stores;
  - b. Liquor and drug stores;
  - c. Airports, city halls, libraries, community and recreation centres;
  - d. Restaurants, pubs and bars (unless seated);
  - e. On public transportation, in a taxi or ride-sharing vehicle;
  - f. Areas of office buildings where services to the public are provided;
  - g. Common areas of sport and fitness centres when not engaged in physical activity;
  - h. Common areas of post-secondary institutions and non-profit organizations; and
  - i. Inside schools for all K-12 staff, visitors and students in grades 4-12.

People who cannot wear a mask due to physical, behavioural or medical condition are exempt from this requirement.

3. **Step 4 delay** – the anticipated timeframe of September 7<sup>th</sup> to head into the fourth and final phase of BC's restart plan will most likely be delayed due to rising case numbers. This means the existing guidelines for indoor activities and capacity limits will remain in place until further notice. The province's restart plan is posted here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restart>

## What does all this mean for Spectrum?

First and foremost, it means we will continue to follow all the safety measures that we have been following to keep the people we support, our staff and caregivers safe. This includes:

- Following the guidelines laid out in our Exposure Control Plan, Universal Precautions and Prevention of Communicable Disease policies, which are posted on the Spectrum website;
- Encouraging everyone to do a daily self-check and ensuring people stay home if they have any symptoms of illness;
- Maintaining safe distance and using PPE when distancing is not possible;
- Frequent hand-washing and cleaning of shared surfaces.

It means we will continue to check in with individuals and families to ensure the safe continuity of support for each person. Over the next few weeks, we will be reviewing support plans and confirming what, if any, adjustments are needed to ensure the safety of individuals and their supporters.

It means we will continue to work closely with our staff and teams to provide up-to-date information and resources so everyone feels safe at work. If staff have any questions or concerns, please speak to your supervisor or contact HR. A reminder that any staff returning from a leave of absence or making changes to their work schedule or availability should speak to HR.

While vaccination is not yet mandatory for staff in community living settings as it is in long term care, this could change in the future. As well, with upcoming proof of vaccination requirement for community activities, staff should get their vaccinations completed or they will be unable to assist people to attend some community activities. Our strong preference would be for all Spectrum employees and caregivers to get vaccinated voluntarily. If you have questions or if you face barriers to getting vaccinated that we can assist with, please contact HR.

Our top priority, as always, is the health and safety of individuals and their supporters. The fall season brings increased risk of respiratory illness as people head indoors, and this year with the Covid numbers increasing the risks are that much greater. Now is the time to prepare. Let's all review the safety plans we've put in place and take the necessary precautions to keep ourselves and everyone else safe.



**Ernie Baatz**

Spectrum Society for Community Living

Express yourself. Build your network. Find your voice.

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## **Be Calm, Be Kind, Be Safe**

Unceded Coast Salish Territories of the Musqueam,  
Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.