



Applicable as of 17th January 2022

COVID-19 – Standards for establishments requiring proof of vaccination for entry

Applicability

The following standards are issued under the Public Health Act Chapter 465 of the Laws of Malta and require strict adherence. Failure to adhere to these standards will result in enforcement procedures, as provided by the Act and the subsidiary legislation.

The applicable legislation is L.N. 8 of 2022 Valid Certificate of Recognised Vaccination against COVID-19 Requirement Regulations, 2022

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has been leaving a mark on the world, with a great toll on health, economies, and society in general. Consistent use of a variety of public health measures have helped to control the pandemic. With the fast spread of the Omicron variant, which is currently responsible for the majority of cases, the drive for vaccination with booster along with the non-pharmaceutical measures in place, are crucial to control and retain a stable situation and prevent acute hospitalisations, ITU admissions and COVID-related deaths.

Access to organised events and establishments

Only persons with a valid and recognized vaccine certificate¹ will be allowed access in these establishments:

- Bar
- Club and 'Każin' (including bowling alleys and amusement areas)
- Restaurant
- Snack bar
- Cinema
- Theatre
- Casino, gaming parlour and bingo hall

¹ https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/Vaccines/Standards-for-vaccine-certificate-validity_13Jan22.pdf

- Sport event
- Gym and fitness centre
- Public swimming pool, spas and saunas
- Organised events (kindly see separate standards outlining further conditions concerning organised events)
- Exhibition

Valid vaccination certificate

Only vaccine certificates which can be verified through digital means (QR Code) are acceptable. A vaccine certificate is considered valid if it is one of the recognised vaccine certificate formats published in the Government Gazette and listed for ease of reference at <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Pages/travel.aspx>. A valid certificate documents vaccination with an EMA-approved vaccine/s (with batches that are authorized by the national regulatory authority of the administering country) and is issued at least 14 days after the last dose. Recognised vaccine certificates which include primary full schedule with a WHO-approved vaccine, are also recognised provided that a booster dose with an EMA-approved vaccine has been given. The list of WHO-approved vaccines can be found here: <https://covid19.trackvaccines.org/agency/who/>.

Validity requirements of locally issued certificates are as per schedule below:

- Adults aged 18 years and over:
 - primary schedule² with the last dose administered not more than 3 months previously
 - OR
 - primary schedule and booster with last dose of booster administered not more than 9 months previously
- Under 18 years – primary schedule

Validity requirements for foreign vaccine certificates are as per the requirements of the country issuing the certificate, provided that the last dose was administered at least 14 days prior.

Verification of vaccine certificates

Establishment staff are responsible for the verification of the Digital Vaccination Certificates and the identity confirmation of the persons entering the establishment or attending the event against an ID card or passport on admission. Establishment staff will be required to have the **CovPass – Malta** App and QR code readers installed on their devices that can read the digital certificates in order to be able to verify the authenticity of COVID vaccine certificates.

² Primary schedule refers to the initial course of vaccination as recommended by the manufacturer e.g., two doses of Spikevax (Moderna), Comirnaty (Pfizer) or Vaxzevria (Astrazeneca) or one dose of the Janssen (Johnson& Johnson) vaccine

Since the CovPass - Malta App can be used to verify other forms of EU Digital Covid Certificates (such as test certificates), staff should initially confirm that the document presented is a vaccination certificate before proceeding to scan it. Only a vaccination certificate is acceptable for entry into the establishment.

CovPass - Malta App is presently only available on Android devices and can be downloaded from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=mt.gov.CovPassMalta&hl=en&gl=US>.

Once installed the CovPass - Malta App only has one (1) function, that is to scan EU DCC certificates and to display if the scanned certificate is valid or not. The app does not store any certificates on the device.

Guidance on verifying EUDCCs and other vaccine certificate formats can be found at: https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/environmental/Documents/covid-19/Covid19_Vaccine_Certificate_Scanning_Manual.pdf

Establishment staff can be guided on the authentication process by sending a request to iccertifikavaccin@gov.mt.

Employees of establishments

Staff working in direct contact with patrons also need to be vaccinated in line with these standards. However, they have an exemption period up to 1st February 2022 to come in line with these requirements, after which they need to be in possession of a valid vaccination certificate as outlined above.

Staff not in direct contact with patrons can be exempted from providing a vaccination certificate at the workplace.

Exemption of persons and/or categories of persons

Children under the age of 12 years

Children under 12 years of age are not required to present a vaccination certificate

Pregnancy

While COVID-19 vaccines, including boosters, can be given at any time in pregnancy, in low-risk situations some women may choose to delay vaccination until 12 weeks of gestation, though they should aim for vaccination as soon as possible thereafter. In view of this, pregnant women **up to 16 weeks gestation** who have delayed receiving their booster due to early pregnancy will be allowed entry to the above establishments if they present a recognised vaccine certificate documenting that they have received the primary schedule of COVID vaccination (even if the last dose of primary vaccination has been administered more than 3 months previously) together with an antenatal card/ doctor's certificate confirming the dates of their pregnancy.

Persons testing positive

In the case of persons unable to take their booster because they tested positive for COVID-19 in the recent past, such persons will be allowed entry to the above establishments/events if they present a recognised vaccine certificate documenting that they have received the

primary schedule of COVID vaccination (even if the last dose has been administered more than 3 months previously) together with their positive COVID-19 test result from a licenced laboratory or registered swabbing centre dated **no more than 6 weeks prior**.

Medical conditions

The only instance in which a request for consideration for exemption from vaccination certificate requirement for entry to establishments on medical grounds is justified is where the first dose of vaccine caused immediate severe anaphylaxis requiring medical treatment. In all other medical conditions and situations, at least one of the authorised vaccines may be administered safely.

In the above exceptional circumstance only, persons would need to apply for an exemption by sending an email with all relevant documentation to covid19.health@gov.mt Subject title of email should read as follows "EXEMPTION REQUEST: Name of person for whom the application is being requested.". This email must be accompanied by a valid, verifiable medical certificate which includes clear contact details of one's medical specialist consultant. A copy of the exemption letter from the Superintendent of Public Health must be presented at the entrance to the establishment (the initial letter from the individual's family doctor/specialist cannot be used to gain entrance). A template exemption letter can be found in the Annex 1 of these standards.

Employees of establishments

Staff not in direct contact with patrons can be exempted from providing a vaccination certificate at their workplace.

Penalty

Any person who manages any establishment or organises any activity in any establishment mentioned above and who gives access to any person not being in possession of a valid certificate of a recognised vaccination in accordance with the applicable criteria as defined in these standards, shall on conviction, be liable to the payment of a penalty of five hundred euro (€500) for each and every instance in which these regulations are breached.

COVID-19 mitigation measures required at such establishments:

- Owners / responsible persons shall exercise the right of refusal of entry onto the premises of patrons if they are visibly unwell or have respiratory symptoms, despite them presenting a vaccination certificate.
- Staff and attendees shall be subject to temperature checks at the entrance for the presence of fever and those with a temperature of 37.2°C or higher shall be denied entrance.
- An appropriate 70% alcohol hand-rub is to be provided at each entrance, and in strategic points in the premises. It should be ensured that all persons sanitise their hands prior to entrance.
- Ongoing cleaning and disinfection operations of all the common areas inside the premises shall be carried out with emphasis on commonly touched areas.
- Records of the contact information (name, surname, ID card/ passport number and

contact phone number) of at least one person per booking need to be kept for up to 28 days after the reservation/attendance at the establishment.

- Masks are to be worn at all times and can only be removed when seated for eating and drinking.
- Adequate ventilation is to be ensured. If air-conditioning is to be used, this should be used in accordance with the guidelines issued by Public Health authorities³. Filters should always be cleaned well and maintained properly.
- Vaccinated singers, musicians and disk jockeys should maintain a distance of at least two (2) metres from patrons due to the generation and emission of respiratory droplets of various sizes that occurs during singing/playing of musical instruments. When such distance cannot be maintained acrylic or tempered glass barriers must be fitted around the singer/musician/DJ stand (up to a height of 2 metres from the floor).
- Singers shall adhere to the Standards for choirs issued by the Public Health authorities.
- Musicians and disk jockeys shall adhere to the Standards for musicians and orchestras issued by the Public Health authorities and shall wear a mask at all times except when playing an instrument that cannot be played while wearing a mask.
- Smoke machines, Low Fog machines, fans, misters or any dispersion units are prohibited both indoors & outdoors.
- Number of persons entering an establishment cannot exceed that outlined in their operating licence.
- No stand-up events are permitted.
- Audiences in cinema and theatres shall be seated in such a way that each seated person maintains social distancing of at least 1.5 metres from another seated person. In the case of persons from the same household, they shall be allowed to sit together in a group, and in such case no more than 6 persons shall be allowed to sit together. For persons not from the same household, up to 4 persons can opt to be seated together.
- All premises are subject to inspection by authorised officers.

Additional measures for establishments serving food and/or drink:

- Only seated patrons are allowed.
- No dancing is allowed.
- All orders to be taken at the table. No orders can be taken at the bar.
- Drinks containing alcohol can only be served with food.
- Shared finger food/ platters can be allowed provided it is only for the persons sharing the same table.
- Assisted buffet is allowed provided that an adequate social distance is maintained. Operator should be responsible to ensure no crowding of patrons.

³ Available at: https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Guidance_Air-conditioning-and-ventilation-systems_23Jun20.pdf

Measures relevant to establishments with seating at tables:

For establishments where the capping for the number of persons in accordance with their operating licence does not exceed a total of 300 persons, seating arrangements can follow operating licence conditions.

For establishments where the capping for the number of persons in accordance with the operating licence exceeds a total of 300 persons, the following applies: no more than 8 persons can be seated except for groups of persons from the same household. Tables to be arranged so that the distance from one table to another table is not less than 1.5m in all directions in an indoor enclosed area and not less than 1 m in all directions on the outside area of venue.

Annex 1

MEDICAL EXEMPTION FROM COVID-19 VACCINATION CERTIFICATE

Section 1. Personal Information

Name _____ Surname _____

Date of Birth _____ ID Number _____

Address _____

Section 2. Declaration by the Superintendent of Public Health

I certify that, on the advice of the Covid Vaccine Advisory Team, and for medical reasons, the above-named individual is unable to receive a COVID-19 immunisation with any of the current COVID-19 vaccines available in Malta. This exemption certificate is valid as follows:

Section 3. Length of Exemption

Permanent _____

Time limited: From _____ to _____

Section 4. Signature

Superintendent of Public Health _____