

November 16, 2021

CLIFF # 6804

Stephanie Smith  
President  
BC General Employees' Union  
2994 Douglas Street  
Victoria, BC V8T 4N4

Dear Stephanie:

**Re: BC Public Service Vaccination Policy**

Thank you for your letter dated November 2, 2021 in which you raised two issues regarding the BC Public Service Vaccination Policy.

The first issue raised was in respect to your concerns of an "inconsistent application" of the BC Public Service Vaccination policy and the BC Pension Corporation's vaccination policy. To further explore your concerns, the BC Public Service Agency is currently in communication with the BC Pension Corporation about their Vaccination Policy.

The second issue raised in your letter is that the November 22, 2021 date for vaccination needs to be applied to anyone entering staff only areas rather than allowing other employers with contracts in place prior to November 1 to have until December 13, 2021 to confirm to the contract manager that any of their employees working in BC Public Service workplaces are fully vaccinated.

As you are aware, I notified BC Public Service employees on October 5 and 19, 2021 that a proof of vaccination policy was being developed and would be released on November 1, 2021. In addition, in my October 19 email to all BC Public Service employees, I urged employees not to wait until on or after November 1 to be vaccinated and indicated that November 22 was chosen because it allowed BC Public Service employees sufficient time since the announcement on October 5 to become fully vaccinated even if they had not received their first dose. I further indicated to Public Service employees that the requirement for vaccination was clear, as was the scope of the potential consequences for not meeting that requirement, neither of which were expected to change on November 1.

The extended timeline for staff from other employers recognizes that staff from other employers were not notified of the requirement until November 1 and their employees may require more time (beyond November 22) to become fully vaccinated. The December 13 date was selected

.../2

because this allowed for the same amount of notice provided to BC Public Service employees of the requirement to be vaccinated. A shortened timeline may impede the ability of those contractors to deliver their contracted services, which would have negative impacts for both the public and BC Public Service employees.

Our workplaces have been safe throughout the pandemic, including while a number of Public Service employees continued to work at public service worksites. As more employees return to our workplaces, we continue to put in place those measures necessary to keep our employees safe during this stage of the pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'L. Wanamaker'.

Lori Wanamaker  
Deputy Minister to the Premier,  
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service

pc: Bobbi Sadler, Deputy Minister, BC Public Service Agency  
Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, BC Public Service Agency  
Rueben Bronee, Executive Lead, BC Public Service Agency



November 2, 2021

***Via email only Lori.Wanamaker@gov.bc.ca***

Lori Wanamaker  
Deputy Minister to the Premier  
PO BOX 9041 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9E1

Dear Deputy Minister

I am writing to you in your capacity as Deputy Minister to the Premier and head of the Public Service.

The BCGEU has had an opportunity to review the policy released yesterday on the requirement for public service workers to provide proof of vaccination from COVID-19.

Based on this preliminary review, I want to bring two issues to your attention.

First, I'd like to draw your attention to what we see as an inconsistent application of this policy. The BCGEU has repeatedly raised concerns with PSA staff about a policy which the BC Pension Corporation has issued to deal with the same issue. The Pension Corporation has put into place a policy which provides for unvaccinated employees to remain working subject to weekly COVID testing.

Simply put, the BCGEU believes that it is fundamentally unfair for unvaccinated employees within the public service and in the same BCGEU bargaining unit to be treated differently. Quite literally, on one side of the street, unvaccinated employees working at the Pension Corporation will continue to be drawing a pay cheque subject to weekly testing. At the same time, unvaccinated employees in the remainder of the public service are facing leave without pay and potential termination if they do not get vaccinated. This is fundamentally flawed and unfair.

To date, our respective staff have been discussing this issue for some time without resolve.

The BCGEU believes that as the Head of the Public Service it is important that we bring this matter to your attention to ensure that all public service employees are treated in a consistent manner. We anticipate our need to communicate to our membership about this very soon and we would appreciate an early resolve to this issue.

---

**VICTORIA - AREA 1**

2994 Douglas St.  
Victoria, BC V8T 4N4  
Phone: (250) 388-9948 / 1-800-667-1033  
Fax: (250) 384-8060 / 1-800-946-0246

We are located on the unceded traditional territory of the Lekwungen people, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

A secondary issue I would like to raise involves the return to office date for public service employees which we understand is scheduled for later this month. The policy released today says that:

***"...Staff from other employers with contracts in place prior to November 1 must confirm to the contract manager by December 13 that any of their employees working in BC Public Service workplaces are fully vaccinated...."***

While we understand the rationale for this policy, it will mean that unvaccinated staff from other employers will have access to staff only areas of public service worksites. For health and safety reasons, the November 22<sup>nd</sup> date for vaccination needs to be applied to anyone entering staff only areas.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues. We anticipate we may have other questions or issues once we have had a further opportunity to review the details of the policy. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of yourself and the Public Service Agency staff to jointly work to protect the health and safety of public service workers.

Best regards



Stephanie Smith  
President

SS:ME:ST  
MoveUP

cc Public Service Bargaining Committee



August 24, 2021

Paul Finch  
Treasurer  
BC General Employees Union  
4911 Canada Way  
Burnaby, BC V5G 3W3

Dear Mr. Finch,

I am writing in response to your August 23rd letter sharing the BCGEU's position with regards to next steps in the BC Public Service's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic, the BC Public Service based its response on the advice and direction of public health authorities, and we continue with that approach. Following the announcements by the Provincial Health Officer this week, today I sent a message to all BC Public Service employees confirming we will postpone full implementation of our flexible work approach.

We still require employees seeking to work remotely longer-term to have an approved telework agreement in place by September 7, 2021. However, we do not require the schedules in those telework agreements to be implemented until October 12, 2021. This means those employees working remotely can continue to do so until that date and we will monitor public health direction in the weeks ahead and make further adjustments if needed.

Regarding masks requirements, the Provincial Health Officer announced the reinstatement of a provincial mask mandate for indoor public settings provincewide. In the Interior Health region masks remain mandatory in all workplaces consistent with recent health orders. Everywhere else in the province, masks are now required in areas of office buildings where services to the public are provided and remain recommended in other workplaces.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the well-being of BC Public Service employees.

Sincerely,

Lori Wanamaker  
Deputy Minister to the Premier  
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service



August 23, 2021

**Sent via email: [Lori.Wanamaker@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Lori.Wanamaker@gov.bc.ca)**

Lori Wanamaker  
Deputy Minister to the Premier  
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service

On July 20<sup>th</sup> you wrote to members of the public service and advised as follows:

***“those who wish to continue working from home will need to have an approved telework agreement in place by September 7, 2021 using the corporate template provided by the BC Public Service Agency. This aligns with the anticipated date for the transition to Step 4 of the provincial Restart Plan, and it provides ample time for you to work through establishing or updating telework agreements with your supervisor...”***

The announcements today from Premier Horgan, Minister of Health Dix and Dr Henry all cast doubt on the readiness of the province to move to stage 4 of the BC restart plan in September.

In light of this, and on behalf of the 30,000 members of the public service I am calling for a delay of the September 7<sup>th</sup> date for those who are currently working at home.

Also and in light of the fact that many members of the public service have continued to work from their worksites throughout the entire pandemic, including the BC Liquor Distribution Branch – LDB, I would like to restate our request that you mandate the use of appropriate masks in all public areas of public service worksites. This is of particular concern given the fact that BCGEU public service members are required to provide essential services to all people regardless of their vaccination status.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and as always I am available to discuss this if you desire.

Yours truly

On behalf of PSBC  
Paul Finch  
Treasurer

ME/AR/JCS