



News release

Vaccine passports must meet highest level of privacy protection, say Canada's privacy guardians

May 20, 2021 – Privacy should be front and centre as governments and businesses consider “vaccine passports” as a tool to help Canadians return to normal life, say Canada’s privacy guardians.

Vaccine passports would allow people to travel and gather again and could support economic recovery while protecting public health. They would, however, require individuals to disclose personal health information about their vaccine or immunity status in exchange, potentially, for access to goods and services such as restaurants, sporting events and airline travel.

“While this may offer substantial public benefit, it is an encroachment on civil liberties that should be taken only after careful consideration,” federal, provincial and territorial privacy commissioners and ombudspersons say in a joint statement issued today. “Vaccine passports must be developed and implemented in compliance with applicable privacy laws. They should also incorporate privacy best practices in order to achieve the highest level of privacy protection commensurate with the sensitivity of the personal health information that will be collected, used or disclosed,” the statement says.

The statement was endorsed during the May 18-19, 2021, annual meeting of federal, provincial and territorial access to information and privacy guardians. Nunavut’s Information and Privacy Commissioner, Graham Steele, participated from Iqaluit.

For more information:

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