



CACP/CPA statement: Front-line police officers should be a priority on the COVID-19 vaccination list

March 11, 2021

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) and the Canadian Police Association (CPA) applaud the federal government's decision to prioritize the distribution and administration of the first COVID-19 vaccines to Canada's most vulnerable citizens. We also support the decision to include police officers in "Stage 2" of the vaccine rollout, thereby acknowledging the role of police officers as first responders responsible for ensuring public safety.

According to Canada's [National Advisory Committee on Immunization statement](#) (NACI's guidance) on the COVID-19 vaccine, "Many **essential services** (e.g. **police**, firefighters, food production) cannot be provided virtually, potentially leading to an increased risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Immunizing essential workers minimizes the disproportionate burden of those taking on additional risks to maintain services essential for the functioning of society."

Regretfully, not all provinces and territories have opted to follow the NACI guidelines. The CACP and the CPA urge those that have excluded the police from the tier 2 vaccination stage to reconsider and maintain the priority for front-line police officers, along with fellow first responders who provide fire and paramedic services.

Our officers are called upon to enforce pandemic regulations and to respond to a multitude of calls for service, involving various levels of risk, and requiring interactions with millions of Canadians. Many policing functions cannot be completed from home and cannot comply with social distancing rules. Therefore, police officers are at an increased risk of contracting and/or transmitting the virus through interactions with the residents of the communities they serve.

While we are pleased that some provinces have included the police in round 2 of COVID-19 vaccinations, the CACP and CPA are asking for assurances that this will be the case for all front-line police officers across the country. We are urging governments to include front-line police officers on their priority list for vaccinations. We understand that our civilian employees may need to wait for a later stage as we maintain rigorous COVID-19 protocols to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Experience has shown that a COVID-19 outbreak in a police service can have significant repercussions on the workforce, our operations, and lead to potential disruptions and delays in our service delivery to the public.

Policing is an essential service. Public safety is our priority. Therefore, police officers should be a priority on the vaccination list.