



Provincial COVID-19 guidance in Canada: a jurisdictional scan and cross-country comparison, May 19-28, 2021

Rapid Jurisdictional Scan

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Abbreviations

AB: Alberta

BC: British Columbia

MB: Manitoba

NB: New Brunswick

NL: Newfoundland and Labrador

NS: Nova Scotia

NT: Northwest Territories

NU: Nunavut

ON: Ontario

PE: Prince Edward Island

PPE: personal protective equipment

QC: Quebec

SK: Saskatchewan

YT: Yukon

VOC: variant of concern



Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a global phenomenon and its effects have been far-reaching. Canadians' experiences of the pandemic, however, have been very different depending on the provinces or territories in which they live. Although federal guidance has been recommended throughout the pandemic by the Public Health Agency of Canada, ultimately each province and territory has been responsible for issuing guidance to their own residents. As a result, the Canadian pandemic landscape has been governed by a patchwork quilt of policies that may or may not be influenced by decisions made in other provinces.

An additional complication to creating COVID-19 guidance came with the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern (VOC) in late 2020 and early 2021. Three VOC—Alpha (B.1.1.7, UK variant), Beta (B.1.351, South Africa variant), and Gamma (P.1, Brazil variant)—were identified in late 2020, and an additional VOC, Delta (B.1.617, Indian variant) was identified in May 2021. VOC can potentially cause changes in transmissibility, clinical presentation, and severity, and they may have an impact on countermeasures.

The purpose of this cross-country jurisdictional scan was to provide a snapshot of Canadian provincial and territorial guidance as it existed at the end of May 2021. The scan retrieved publicly available government and health authority guidance documents related to public health measures, including those that had potentially changed as a result of VOC, such as vaccination approaches, reopening plans, infection control guidance, self-isolation and quarantine requirements, testing requirements, household bubbles, school closures, and provincial or territorial border restrictions. Additionally, it retrieved guidance documents related to health systems arrangements that had potentially changed as a result of VOC such as staff and visitor personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements, other infection control measures in acute care settings, and cohorting guidelines.

This jurisdictional scan is a companion document to our team's rapid scoping review, *Public Health and Health Systems Impacts of SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern*,¹ which is available through COVID-END and the SPOR Evidence Alliance.



Methods

Provincial and territorial guidance documents were retrieved beginning on May 19, 2021 by running a series of targeted Google searches of government and health authority websites using the search engine's *site:* advanced search function. Searches were designed and overseen by an experienced information specialist (LB). The following four searches were executed for each province and territory, with a *site:* command added for each website of interest:

covid-19 variants

covid-19 restrictions

covid-19 guidance

covid-19 public health

For example, a full search string of the Government of Saskatchewan's website was run as follows: *covid-19 variants site: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/>*.

Included resources were limited to documents or webpages produced by governments, health authorities, or other central health organizations. Only the most recent guidance documents at the time of the search were included.

The title, author organization, URL, date last updated, and access date were recorded for all relevant resources using Excel. The resources were then used to populate the tables included in this report. To keep the results as up to date as possible, additional resources were added up to and including May 28, 2021.

To provide additional context for the guidelines, visual representations of the rate of active cases per 100,000 population since January 31, 2020 were taken from the Public Health Agency of Canada's Public Health Infobase on May 31, 2021.

Results

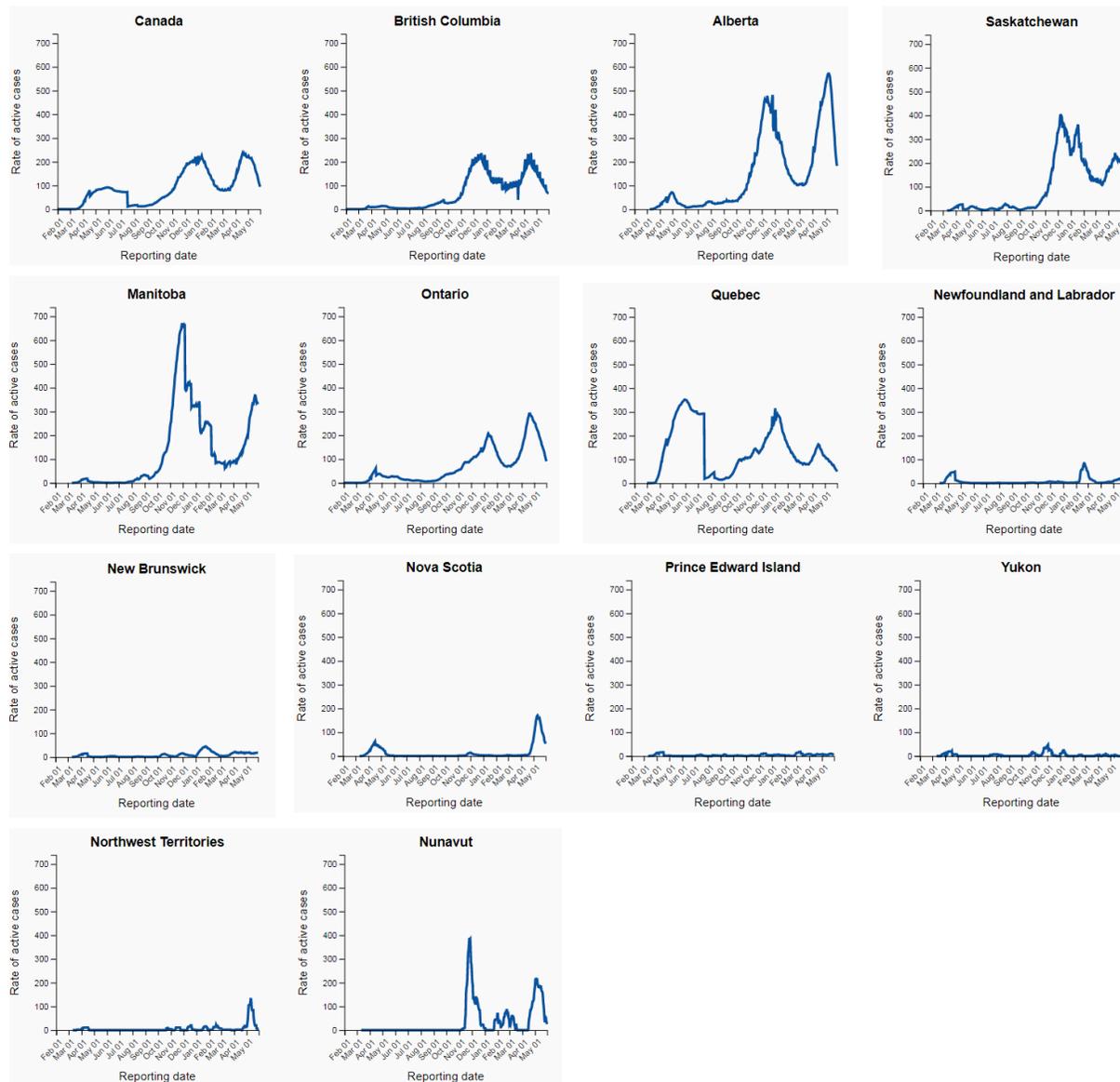
182 provincial and territorial guidance documents are referenced in this report. Most are government documents, and some have been issued by health authorities and other provincial health organizations.

Figure 1 is a composite of 14 graphs, one for all of Canada and one for each of the provinces and territories, released by the Public Health Agency of Canada's Public

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Health Infobase.² The graphs show visual representations of the rate of active cases per 100,000 population from January 31, 2020 to May 31, 2021. This jurisdictional scan represents guidance as it existed May 19-28, 2021, which is visually represented at the end of these graphs, when the third wave is shown to be subsiding in most provinces and territories.

Figure 1. Rate of active cases per 100,000 population from January 31, 2020 to May 31, 2021²



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Table 1 highlights differences in vaccine rollout approaches and reopening plans across Canada. At the time of writing (May 28, 2021), most provinces had made vaccines available to anyone in the general population aged 12 and over, with some provinces still restricting to those aged 18 and over. More stark differences, however, are apparent in two other areas: each province's vaccine rollout approach, which prioritized different at-risk populations as more vaccines became available, and each province's reopening plan. Reopening plans varied widely in their target dates, with some provinces promising a "return to normal" (e.g., Alberta by late June or early July 2021, British Columbia by early September 2021), and others taking a more cautious approach.

Overall, very few changes have been made to public health and health systems guidelines as a result of VOC. Table 2 demonstrates that changes to common public health guidance around the basics of COVID-19 prevention—hand washing, masking, and physical distancing—remained generally unchanged as a result of VOC.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 compare each province's isolation/quarantine requirements (the terms are often used interchangeably) for people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, their close contacts, and how those close contacts are defined and notified. Guidance was fairly consistent across provinces, with isolation/quarantine periods of either 10 or 14 days for people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, and 14 days across the board for close contacts. None of the guidance had changed as a result of VOC. The definition of close contacts varied across provinces, as did the rigour of restrictions required for that group. For example, while most provinces require complete self-isolation in the home for close contacts for 14 days, Ontario allows close contacts to perform essential activities like grocery shopping or going to work or school.

Table 6 highlights one of the biggest differences in provincial guidelines in Canada: isolation requirements for travellers within the country. Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, and Yukon all require 14 days of self-isolation upon arrival in the province or territory (or, in the case of Nunavut, 14 days of self-isolation at an approved location outside of the territory is required before arrival) for everyone, even those travelling from within Canada. Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan have no self-isolation requirements for domestic cross-provincial travellers, although British Columbia cautions that all travel into the province should be essential in nature, and Ontario recommends (but does not require) a 14-day self-isolation period. Additionally, some provinces (e.g., Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island) recommend testing three times throughout the isolation period. Federal guidance applies to all provinces and territories for international travellers.

Table 7 compares other outbreak prevention measures such as household bubble requirements, school closures, and provincial border restrictions, all of which are highly variable depending on the level of outbreak risk within each province at any given time and may also vary in different regions within a province.

Table 8 compares each province's eligibility requirements for COVID-19 testing. Most provinces only allow asymptomatic testing if a person is a close contact of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case, or if they are recommended for testing by public health officials. Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan allow anyone to get tested, regardless of symptoms. Rapid testing is available in some workplaces in some provinces, but Nova Scotia is the only province which offers regular rapid testing to asymptomatic people in the community.



Finally, Table 9 demonstrates that most health systems policies remain unchanged as a result of VOC. PPE guidelines for acute care staff and visitors either remained unchanged, were unclear, or unavailable. Other infection control changes were more likely to be connected to the case numbers or "alert level" in a given province at that point in time, rather than be tied to VOC in general. Cohorting guidance related to VOC was only available from Alberta, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

Public Health Measures

Table 1. Vaccine rollout and recommendations for behaviour post-vaccination as of May 28, 2021

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	What groups are currently eligible to be vaccinated?	What was the vaccine rollout approach (e.g., age-based, priority groups, at-risk populations)?	Is the AstraZeneca vaccine still available?	Are there any recommendations for behaviour post-vaccination? Does this differ between first and second doses?
<i>AB</i>	All people aged 12+ ³	Began with priority groups (healthcare workers, long term care workers) followed by an age-based approach combined with targeting at-risk groups (underlying conditions, at-risk populations); opened to general public on May 6 (aged 30+) and May 10 (aged 12+) ⁴	Yes, for people aged 18+ ⁴	<p>The Government of Alberta released a reopening plan on May 26, 2021 that outlines a plan for relaxation of restrictions based on level of vaccination in the general population; reopening starts on June 1, 2021 provided at least 50% of the population has received one dose; by late June or early July, when it is anticipated 70% of the population will have received one dose, all restrictions will be lifted⁵</p> <p>Additionally, Albertans who have received at least one dose of vaccine, who have been identified as close contacts of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case, may exit quarantine at day 7 if they test negative⁶</p>
<i>BC</i>	All people aged 12+ ⁷	Rollout followed a four-phased approach: Phase 1 included the high-risk population	No, AstraZeneca program is paused; remaining vaccines will be	The Government of British Columbia released a reopening

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	What groups are currently eligible to be vaccinated?	What was the vaccine rollout approach (e.g., age-based, priority groups, at-risk populations)?	Is the AstraZeneca vaccine still available?	Are there any recommendations for behaviour post-vaccination? Does this differ between first and second doses?
		of long-term care residents and health care workers who would be working with COVID-19 patients, as well as remote Indigenous communities; Phase 2 included high-risk populations such as healthcare workers, Indigenous peoples born prior to 1955 and vulnerable populations; Phase 3 and 4 focused on general population using age-based approach. ⁷	held for those who have received their first dose of AstraZeneca and are eligible for their second dose ⁸	plan on May 25, 2021 that outlines a plan for relaxation of restrictions based on the level of vaccination in the general population; if 70% of the population is vaccinated with at least one dose by September 7, 2021, the plan is to return to normal ⁹
<i>MB</i>	All people aged 12+ ¹⁰	Began with priority groups (health care workers, congregate living facility staff and residents, First Nations people) followed by an age-based approach for the general population ¹¹	AstraZeneca is being offered to eligible individuals who would otherwise have to wait for the mRNA vaccine ¹¹	No, those who have received vaccination are advised to still follow provincial health orders ¹¹
<i>NB</i>	All people aged 18+ ¹²	Unclear; information about previous rollout not archived online	The province is continuing to offer the AstraZeneca vaccine to those aged 55+ who have provided their informed consent ¹³	The Government of New Brunswick released a reopening plan on May 27, 2021 that outlines a plan for relaxation of restrictions based on the level of vaccination in the general population; the 3-phase plan begins on June 7, when it is expected that 75% of the population aged 12+ will be vaccinated. Among the first restriction relaxations is the reestablishment of part of the Atlantic bubble, with no border

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	What groups are currently eligible to be vaccinated?	What was the vaccine rollout approach (e.g., age-based, priority groups, at-risk populations)?	Is the AstraZeneca vaccine still available?	Are there any recommendations for behaviour post-vaccination? Does this differ between first and second doses?
				restrictions between NB, PE, and NL ¹⁴
<i>NL</i>	All people aged 12+ ¹⁵	Began with priority groups (people living in long-term care, healthcare workers, Indigenous and remote communities) followed by an age-based approach combined with targeting at-risk groups (underlying conditions, at-risk populations) and then an age-based approach for the general population ¹⁵	Yes, recommended for individuals aged 55-64 ¹⁵	No, those who have received vaccination are advised to still follow provincial health orders ¹⁵
<i>NS</i>	All people aged 12+ ¹⁶	Began with priority groups (people living in long-term care and their caregivers, healthcare workers), people in large group settings (e.g. prisons), rotational workers, followed by an age-based approach for the general population; at-risk populations (e.g. non-healthcare frontline workers or people with underlying conditions) were only eligible under the age-based approach and not as a priority group ¹⁶	No, AstraZeneca program is paused because NS has enough mRNA vaccine to vaccinate people who are 40+ ¹⁶	The Government of Nova Scotia released a reopening plan on May 28, 2021 that outlines a plan for relaxation of restrictions based on the level of vaccination in the general population; the 5-phase plan begins on June 2, as just over 50% of the population has been vaccinated, and the remainder of the plan is based on vaccination rates and case numbers rather than firm dates ¹⁷
<i>NT</i>	All people aged 12+ ¹⁸	A phased approach focusing first on people at risk of severe disease from COVID-19 (e.g. advanced age, existing conditions) and people at risk of importing COVID-19	No AstraZeneca vaccines were administered in NT; the territory was only delivered Moderna and, more recently, Pfizer vaccines ¹⁸	Fully vaccinated household members of a fully vaccinated traveller (provided that all those that travelled are fully vaccinated)

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	What groups are currently eligible to be vaccinated?	What was the vaccine rollout approach (e.g., age-based, priority groups, at-risk populations)?	Is the AstraZeneca vaccine still available?	Are there any recommendations for behaviour post-vaccination? Does this differ between first and second doses?
		to NT (e.g. resident workers traveling for work) ¹⁹		are not required to self-isolate, but are still required to self-monitor for the full 14 days. If at any time either the traveller or the vaccinated household member becomes sick with symptoms of COVID-19, they are required to self-isolate immediately and contact a local health care provider ²⁰
<i>NU</i>	All people aged 18+ ²¹	Priority given to at-risk groups such as people living in long-term care and their caregivers; general population aged 18+ were eligible very early in the rollout process ^{21,22}	No AstraZeneca vaccines were administered in Nunavut; the territory was only delivered Moderna ²¹	No, those who have received vaccination are advised to still follow provincial health orders ²²
<i>ON</i>	All people aged 12+ ²³	3-phase approach began with priority groups (vulnerable populations and their caregivers, older adults, people in high-risk settings including frontline essential workers), including people who lived in “hot spot” communities in phase 2, followed by an age-based approach for the general population ²⁴	No, AstraZeneca program is paused; remaining vaccines will be held for those who have received their first dose of AstraZeneca and are eligible for their second dose ²⁵	The Government of Ontario released a reopening plan on May 20, 2021 that outlines a plan for relaxation of restrictions based on the level of vaccination in the general population ²⁶
<i>PE</i>	All people aged 12+ ²⁷	Began with priority groups (residents and staff of shared living facilities, healthcare workers, people aged 80+, Indigenous	No, AstraZeneca program is paused ²⁹	The Government of Prince Edward Island released a reopening plan on May 27, 2021 that outlines a

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	What groups are currently eligible to be vaccinated?	What was the vaccine rollout approach (e.g., age-based, priority groups, at-risk populations)?	Is the AstraZeneca vaccine still available?	Are there any recommendations for behaviour post-vaccination? Does this differ between first and second doses?
		communities, rotational workers) followed by an age-based approach for the general population ²⁸		plan for relaxation of restrictions based on the level of vaccination in the general population; the 5-phase plan begins on June 6, 2021, and by phase 2 on June 27, it is anticipated that the Atlantic bubble will be reopened to all Atlantic Provinces; a return to normal is expected by September 12 ³⁰
QC	All people aged 12+ ³¹	An 11-step process based on levels of decreasing risk, beginning with people in long-term care, workers in long-term care, people living in private seniors' residences, people living in remote communities with high proportions of Indigenous people, and then an age-based approach ³²	Yes, for people aged 45+ ³³	Starting June 25, 2021, there will be an easing of masking and distancing restrictions for private gatherings of people who have received two doses of vaccine; similar easing of restrictions for public gatherings is expected at the end of August 2021 or later ³⁴
SK	All people aged 12+ ³⁵	Phased rollout beginning with targeted priority populations such as healthcare workers and long-term care home residents, then an age-based approach for the general population ³⁶	Yes, for people 55+ ³⁶	The Government of Saskatchewan released a reopening plan on May 27, 2021 that outlines a plan for relaxation of restrictions based on the level of vaccination in the general population; the 5-phase plan does not list specific dates, but phase 1 is slated to begin on May 30, 2021 ³⁷

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	What groups are currently eligible to be vaccinated?	What was the vaccine rollout approach (e.g., age-based, priority groups, at-risk populations)?	Is the AstraZeneca vaccine still available?	Are there any recommendations for behaviour post-vaccination? Does this differ between first and second doses?
YT	All people aged 12+ ³⁸	The goal was to vaccinate 75% of the adult population by end of March 2021, starting with people living in group settings (e.g. long-term care homes, group home), healthcare workers, people aged 80+, and people living in rural and remote communities, including First Nations people; ³⁹ as of May 17, 2021, 76% of eligible people had received one dose and 67% had received both doses ³⁸	No AstraZeneca vaccines were administered in Yukon; the territory was only delivered Moderna and, more recently, Pfizer vaccines ^{40,41}	People who have received both doses of vaccine at least 14 days before entering Yukon are not required to isolate ⁴²

Table 2. Changes made to the following hand washing, masking, and physical distancing guidance as a result of VOC or after December 2020, as of May 28, 2021

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Has hand washing guidance changed? If so, how?	Has masking guidance changed? If so, how?	Has physical distancing guidance changed? If so, how?
<i>AB</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁴³	Unclear; masks are mandatory in public spaces ⁴⁴ but it is unclear when this guidance came into effect	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁴³
<i>BC</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁴⁵	Unclear; all staff and students grade 4-12 are required to wear a mask (students K-3 are advised to), masks are mandatory at restaurants when not at a table, masks are mandatory in many indoor public settings, and masks are highly recommended for common areas in apartment buildings and shared workspaces. ⁴⁶ Unclear as to when this was implemented	People can gather in groups of 10 outdoors, but physical distancing must be maintained; people participating in group sports must maintain 3 metres of physical distance from each other ⁴⁶
<i>MB</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁴⁷	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁴⁷	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁴⁷
<i>NB</i>	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ⁴⁸	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ⁴⁸	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ⁴⁸
<i>NL</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁴⁹	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ^{49,50}	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ^{49,51}
<i>NS</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁵²	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁵²	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁵²

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Has hand washing guidance changed? If so, how?	Has masking guidance changed? If so, how?	Has physical distancing guidance changed? If so, how?
<i>NT</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ^{20,53}	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ^{20,54}	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ^{20,55}
<i>NU</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ^{56,57}	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ^{56,57}	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ^{56,57}
<i>ON</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁵⁸	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ^{58,59}	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁵⁸
<i>PE</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁶⁰	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁶⁰	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁶⁰
<i>QC</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁶¹	Due to VOC, masks are mandatory for all workers in all workplaces at all times regardless of ability to physically distance, unless they work alone in an office with a closed door; masks are also mandatory for all people aged 10+ on public transit and in indoor or partially indoor public spaces, but this guidance was in place prior to VOC ⁶²	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁶¹
<i>SK</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁶³	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁶³	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ⁶³

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Has hand washing guidance changed? If so, how?	Has masking guidance changed? If so, how?	Has physical distancing guidance changed? If so, how?
YT	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged	Masks are mandatory in all public indoor spaces in Yukon; although not directly tied to VOC, this guidance was enacted on December 1, 2020 ⁶⁴	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged

Table 3. Isolation/quarantine requirements for people in the community suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 as of May 28, 2021

Province/ Territory	Isolation/quarantine requirements for people suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19	Does guidance differ for VOC cases?
AB	10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms have been resolved for 24 hours, whichever is longer; ^{65,66} this applies to confirmed cases as well as anyone with symptoms ⁶⁶	No; it is recommended that all who test positive or have symptoms should assume they have a VOC ⁶⁶
BC	10 days from the start of symptoms, and until infected person feels better and fever is gone ⁶⁷	No; most positive cases are tested to determine if they are a variant strain, but guidance remains the same ⁴⁵
MB	10 days; if still symptomatic at day 10, isolation must continue ⁶⁸	No
NB	14 days from the start of symptoms, unless a negative test result is received ⁶⁹	No
NL	Unspecified; length of isolation appears to be dependent on individual public health advice. Those who receive a negative test result may exit isolation 24 hours after symptoms resolve ⁷⁰	No
NS	14 days from the start of symptoms, unless a negative test result is received ⁷¹	No
NT	14 days; if positive test received, isolation may be longer than 14 days ⁷²	No
NU	14 days if suspected or confirmed ⁷³	No
ON	For mild to moderate illness: 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours, whichever is longer; for asymptomatic cases, the isolation period is 10 days from testing day ⁷⁴ For severe illness requiring intensive care, or in those with severe immune compromise: 20 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours, whichever is longer, and no fever is present ⁷⁴	No

*Province/
Territory* Isolation/quarantine requirements for people suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 Does guidance differ for VOC cases?

<i>PE</i>	14 days from the start of symptoms, until cleared by a public health official ⁷⁵	No
<i>QC</i>	10 days from the start of symptoms; fever must be resolved for at least 48 hours and other symptoms (except cough or loss of sense of smell, which can last longer) must be resolved for at least 24 hours; this applies to confirmed cases as well as anyone with symptoms who has not received a negative test ^{76,77}	No
<i>SK</i>	10 days from the start of symptoms, for positive cases only ⁷⁸	No
<i>YT</i>	10 days from the start of symptoms, even if symptoms clear before 10 days have passed, unless a negative test result is received ⁷⁹	No

Table 4. Approach to contact tracing and identification as of May 28, 2021

Province/ Territory	How are close contacts defined?	How are close contacts notified of potential exposures?	Do close contacts receive any communication from public health officials?
AB	Anyone who has lived with or was within two metres of a person who has COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more of cumulative contact, who has had direct contact with bodily fluids of an infected person, has provided care to an infected person, or who has had physical contact with an infected person ⁸⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via text message from Alberta Health Services⁸⁰ • By using the ABTraceTogether mobile app⁸¹ 	Close contacts receive text messages to notify them of potential exposures, and when their required isolation/quarantine period is complete ⁸⁰
BC	Anyone who has been near a person who has COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more when there were insufficient health measures in place; this could be 2 days prior to the infected person developed symptoms ⁸²	A public health nurse will contact the identified close contact ⁸²	Yes, public health gets in contact with the identified contacts and asks them about COVID-19 symptoms ⁸²
MB	Anyone who has been in close physical proximity (less than two metres or six feet) for more than 10 minutes to someone who has COVID-19 ⁸³	Public health officials in general conduct monitoring over the phone ⁸³	Public health officials notify close contacts of their exposure to COVID-19 and provide instructions on how to self-isolate/quarantine ⁸³
NB	Unclear	Public Health gets in touch with the close contacts and asks them about symptoms of COVID-19 ⁸⁴	Yes ⁸⁴
NL	Anyone who provided direct care for a person who has COVID-19 without consistent and appropriate use of recommended PPE, close prolonged (≥ 15 minutes) contact within two meters of a confirmed COVID-19 case, or had direct contact with infectious body fluids of a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via phone call from Public Health • By using COVID-19 Alert App as an additional measure to support and augment public health's existing contact tracing efforts⁸⁵ 	Contacts of confirmed cases receive an initial follow-up within 24-48 hours from public health ⁸⁵

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	How are close contacts defined?	How are close contacts notified of potential exposures?	Do close contacts receive any communication from public health officials?
	case (e.g., was coughed or sneezed on) without the appropriate use of recommended PPE ⁸⁵		
<i>NS</i>	Anyone who has been within 2m of a person who has COVID-19 for an extended period of time, or who has been exposed to bodily fluids ⁸⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via phone call or text message from public health officials⁸⁷ • Public exposure notices reported daily on NS Health website 	NS public health will contact positive cases and close contacts by text message or phone call. Texts/calls will advise people they have tested positive or identified as a close contact of someone who has COVID-19. Directions on isolating, getting tested etc. will be provided ⁸⁷
<i>NT</i>	Anyone who has spent 15+ minutes within 2m of a person who has COVID-19 ⁸⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A health care provider will investigate who was in contact with that person. They call or follow up with all the people the person identified as being in contact with that are at risk of getting the virus. They will let them know that they were in contact with a person that was confirmed to be positive and provide instructions on what they need to do⁸⁸ • Public exposure notices listed online⁸⁹ 	A health care provider will investigate who was in contact with that person. They call or follow up with all the people the person identified as being in contact with that are at risk of getting the virus ⁸⁸
<i>NU</i>	High risk contact: people in close proximity to you who you spend more than 10 minutes with Low risk contact: people you spend less than 10 minutes with or who you are not in close proximity to ⁹⁰	Health care worker reaches out to contacts identified by someone who tests positive. Contacts will be given instruction which may include self-isolation ⁹⁰	Yes
<i>ON</i>	Household contact: anyone who lives with the person being tested, or who provided care to the person in the home, or who has similar	Ontario Public Health (OPH) contacts all people who test positive for COVID-19 and in some situations, identifies close contacts	Due to a rise in cases, in many instances OPH is asking individuals who test positive for

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	How are close contacts defined?	How are close contacts notified of potential exposures?	Do close contacts receive any communication from public health officials?
	<p>unprotected contact with you (e.g., a partner living in another home)</p> <p>Close contact: anyone exposed to a person who tested positive for the virus⁷⁴</p>	<p>through a detailed review of factors such as the individual's symptoms, where they have been and with whom they have interacted; OPH is currently seeing a rise in the number of people testing positive and COVID-19 case management team is no longer able to contact trace as previously⁷⁴</p>	<p>COVID-19 to be responsible for notifying their contacts⁷⁴</p> <p>Public health units are not expected to collect individual level information on the household members of the quarantining contact⁹¹</p>
<i>PE</i>	<p>Anyone who provides care for or has close physical contact with a person who is confirmed or suspected to be infected with COVID-19, or who has close physical contact with a person who is self-isolating as a result of potential exposure to COVID-19 (such as history of travel or a close contact with a positive case) or who comes into direct contact with the infectious body fluids of a person who is confirmed or suspected to be infected with COVID-19, but does not include a person who consistently and appropriately uses PPE while caring for a person who is confirmed or suspected to be infected with COVID-19.⁷⁵</p>	Unclear	Unclear
<i>QC</i>	<p>Anyone who has been within two metres of an infected person for more than 15 minutes with neither person wearing a mask⁹²</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From public health authorities • Via the COVID Alert mobile app • Directly from the confirmed case • Through a child's school or daycare⁹³ 	Unclear
<i>SK</i>	<p>Anyone who has provided care for someone with, lived with or had prolonged close contact (less than 2 meters) with, had direct contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID Alert App⁹⁴ • Notification from public health⁹⁵ 	<p>Yes, public health will contact persons identified as being at high risk due to contact</p>

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	How are close contacts defined?	How are close contacts notified of potential exposures?	Do close contacts receive any communication from public health officials?
	with bodily fluid from, shared personal items with, or was an airplane passenger seated within 2 meters of someone who is positive for COVID-19 ⁷⁸		with someone suspected of confirmed of having COVID-19 ⁹⁵
YT	Undefined; appears to be situationally dependent ⁹⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact from Yukon Communicable Disease Control (YCDC) and/or Yukon Community Nursing⁹⁶ • Public exposure notices listed online⁹⁷ 	Unclear

Table 5. Isolation/quarantine requirements for close contacts as of May 28, 2021

Province/ Territory	Isolation/quarantine requirements for close contacts of COVID-19 cases	Does guidance differ for close contacts of VOC cases?
AB	14 days after last exposure, regardless of testing results ⁶⁶ ; close contacts who have received at least one dose of vaccine may exit quarantine at day 7 if they test negative ⁶	No; it is recommended that all close contacts should assume they were exposed to a VOC ⁶⁶
BC	14 days after last exposure, regardless of testing results; if a person is already self-isolating when they learn that a household contact tests positive, the self-isolation period must restart on the day that person tests positive (i.e., if already on day 6 of isolation, the clock would start back at day 0 for extend for another 14 days, for a total of 20 days) ⁶⁷	No
MB	14 days after last exposure, regardless of testing results, unless otherwise advised by public health officials ⁹⁸	No
NB	14 days after last exposure; contacts with symptoms are sent for testing ⁸⁴	No
NL	14 days after last exposure, regardless of testing results ⁷⁰	No
NS	14 days after last exposure, or until a negative test result is received ⁷¹	No
NT	14 days after last exposure, regardless of testing results; anyone testing positive will need to isolate for a further 14 days, for a total of up to 28 days or longer ⁷²	No
NU	14 days after last exposure ⁷³	No
ON	14 days after last exposure, regardless of testing results; household contacts must self-isolate for 14 days after the last time they were in contact with the person suspected to be infected, unless the person suspected to be infected received a negative test result – but household contacts may leave self-isolation for essential reasons (e.g. attending work/school/daycare, essential errands such as groceries) ⁷⁴	No

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Isolation/quarantine requirements for close contacts of COVID-19 cases	Does guidance differ for close contacts of VOC cases?
<i>PE</i>	14 days after last exposure, regardless of testing results, unless otherwise advised by public health officials ^{75,99}	No
<i>QC</i>	14 days after last exposure, unless otherwise directed by public health authorities ⁹³	No
<i>SK</i>	14 days after last exposure ⁷⁸	No
<i>YT</i>	Decided on a case-by-case basis depending on nature of exposure; requirements may include isolation/quarantine for up to 14 days post-exposure ⁹⁶	No

Table 6. Isolation, testing, and follow-up requirements for domestic and international travellers as of May 28, 2021

Province/ Territory	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>within</i> Canada	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>outside</i> Canada (i.e., international travellers)	Public Health follow-up	Exemptions
AB	None required	14 days, plus an additional 10 days if symptoms develop or tested positive; ⁶⁵ testing requirements as per federal guidance within 72 hours of arrival and again on day 8 of isolation/quarantine ^{100,101}	Federal follow-up using ArriveCAN ^{100,101}	Federal exemptions only ^{100,101}
BC	None required, but travellers are reminded that all travel into BC should be essential ¹⁰²	Self-quarantine for 14 days, comply with federal testing requirements ¹⁰²	Federal follow-up using ArriveCAN; Service BC will conduct checks to ensure compliance and the travellers are following their 14-day isolation period ¹⁰³	Federal exemptions only ¹⁰⁴
MB	14 days of self-isolation is required for all individuals returning to or coming to Manitoba from all jurisdictions ¹⁰⁵	Individuals who travelled internationally must go into mandatory self-isolation (quarantine) for the remainder of their 14 days from the date of arrival to Canada upon arriving in Manitoba. The days in self-isolation (quarantine) at port of entry count towards the 14-day period ¹⁰⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals will be notified by a public health official if self-isolation is required Once notified, the person must go to their residence or an approved self-isolation location and remain there for 14 days, or until they are directed otherwise by a public health official¹⁰⁵ 	Exemptions apply to a broad spectrum of people travelling for work purposes, providing essential services (e.g. police, emergency services), people travelling directly through the province, people facilitating child care arrangements, personnel connected with professional hockey teams, people who cross the provincial border regularly for

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>within</i> Canada	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>outside</i> Canada (i.e., international travellers)	Public Health follow-up	Exemptions
				work, school, or health purposes, and more (see full reference for details) ¹⁰⁵
<i>NB</i>	14 days of self-isolation is required for all people entering NB, either at a designated isolation facility or an approved alternate isolation facility All travellers, regardless of where they are isolating, must arrange to be tested for COVID-19 on Day 5 and Day 10; isolation must continue for 14 days regardless of testing results ¹⁰⁶	As per federal guidance ¹⁰⁶	Unclear	Cross-border child custody/care; operators of commercial air, rail and marine; NB residents returning to NB after medical care in NS or PEI; NB residents returning to NB after accessing urgent or specialized veterinary care in NS or PEI; residents of Campobello Island ¹⁰⁶
<i>NL</i>	14 days of self-isolation is required for all people entering NL, regardless of testing results ¹⁰⁷ All travellers aged 5+ arriving to NL who will be in the province for more than two days are required to be tested for COVID-19; testing protocol depends on a traveller's self-isolation arrangements ¹⁰⁸	International travellers arriving to NL must follow provincial isolation and testing protocols in addition to federal requirement ¹⁰⁸	Phone calls with public health officials, who may be contacting you for follow-up if you will be in the province for more than 3 days ¹⁰⁷	Essential workers ^{109,110} and permanent residents of communities along the Labrador-Quebec border who only travel within those communities ¹⁰⁸
<i>NS</i>	14 days of self-isolation is required for all people entering NS,	After starting quarantine at your point of entry into Canada, you can	During 14-day isolation period, you will receive regular calls, texts or	People traveling between NS, NB and PEI for work, school, childcare

Province/ Territory	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>within</i> Canada	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>outside</i> Canada (i.e., international travellers)	Public Health follow-up	Exemptions
	regardless of testing results or vaccination status ¹¹¹	<p>complete the rest of your quarantine in NS once you receive your first negative test result and if you meet criteria for essential travel. You need to quarantine for 14 days, even with negative test result. Your quarantine period ends after 14 days if you receive a second (day-10) negative test result. International travellers who complete their quarantine outside NS must isolate for another 14 days when they arrive in NS¹¹¹</p> <p>Testing is strongly recommended on day 1 or 2 and day 12, 13 or 14 of isolation¹¹²</p>	emails on behalf of NS department of health; must complete daily check-ins, failure to do so may result in a fine ¹¹²	<p>or essential vet services do not need to isolate, but must have minimal contact with others for 14 days upon return to NS^{111,113}</p> <p>Other exempt travellers from outside NS include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People engaged in legal proceeding in NS • People traveling for essential health services & accompanying support persons • Certain workers who must enter NS to perform their work duties (e.g., trades, transport sector) <p>Exempt travelers must meet certain conditions and avoid contact with others while in NS¹¹²</p>
NT	14 days of self-isolation is required for all people entering NT, in an approved location ¹¹⁴	As per federal guidance ¹¹⁴	Unclear	Fully vaccinated individuals and household members are eligible for shortened self-isolation; they can get tested for COVID-19 on the eighth day of the 14-day self-isolation period, and if the results are negative for COVID-19, then

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>within</i> Canada	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>outside</i> Canada (i.e., international travellers)	Public Health follow-up	Exemptions
				only self-monitoring is necessary for the remainder of the 14-day time frame ¹¹⁴ The Office of the Chief Public Health Officer is now considering self-isolation exemption requests ¹¹⁴
<i>NU</i>	Before returning to NU, residents must undergo a mandatory 14-day isolation period at a designated isolation site. These include: Ottawa, Winnipeg, Edmonton or Yellowknife. People will be required to isolate in a hotel, free of charge, where meals will be provided ¹¹⁵	As per federal guidance; it is assumed that anyone entering NU will do so from a Canadian point of origin, and must therefore undergo a mandatory 14-day isolation period before entering NU ¹¹⁵	After completing a 14-day isolation at a designated isolation site, residents will be allowed to enter NU once they have tested negative for COVID-19 ¹¹⁵	None specified
<i>ON</i>	14 days of self-isolation is recommended but not required for all people entering ON; only essential travel is recommended ⁷⁴ As of April 19, 2021, travel from MB or QC into ON was restricted ¹¹⁶	In response to VOC, as of February 1, 2021, there was mandatory on-arrival testing of all travellers entering Toronto Pearson International Airport ¹¹⁷ Other isolation and testing requirements as per federal guidance	Unspecified	Exemptions from travel restrictions for people travelling from MB or QC will only be allowed for specified reasons, including going to work, receiving medical care or social services, business transport of goods, exercising Indigenous or treaty rights, for primary residents of ON, people moving to ON, and

Province/ Territory	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>within</i> Canada	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>outside</i> Canada (i.e., international travellers)	Public Health follow-up	Exemptions
				more (see full reference for details) ¹¹⁶
PE	<p>14 days of self-isolation is required for all people entering PE, or for the duration of their stay if shorter than 14 days⁹⁹</p> <p>Everyone arriving in PE who is in isolation and is not already being tested by the province of PE, is required to be tested on days 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11. For a family arriving and isolating together, up to two people per family are required to be tested. All other self-isolation requirements remain in place⁹⁹</p>	<p>If you have been outside of Canada, you are required to isolate for 14 days upon arrival in PEI, regardless of time spent in any federal quarantine facility⁹⁹</p> <p>For international travelers, PEI testing requirements must be completed at PEI testing sites; federal border testing and federal testing kits are not considered part of the provincial testing regime⁹⁹</p>	Unspecified	<p>Family members are permitted to travel to PEI to attend a visitation, funeral and/or burial service. Individuals can visit a person in an end of life situation. If the person is a resident of palliative care at a PEI facility, you must get permission from the facility to visit before travelling to PEI. Pre-travel approval is also required to enter the province.⁹⁹</p>
QC	None required	14 days, as per federal guidance; testing required upon arrival and on day 10 of isolation/quarantine ¹¹⁸	Federal follow-up using ArriveCAN ^{100,101}	Federal exemptions only ^{100,101}
SK	None required; anyone entering SK should self-monitor for 14 days and self-isolate at the first sign of any symptoms ¹¹⁹	Isolation as per federal guidance; testing required upon arrival and near the end of 14-day quarantine ¹¹⁹	Federal follow-up using ArriveCAN ¹⁰¹	Federal exemptions only ¹⁰⁴

Province/ Territory	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>within</i> Canada	Length of isolation period and testing requirements for people entering the province from <i>outside</i> Canada (i.e., international travellers)	Public Health follow-up	Exemptions
YT	14 days, ¹²⁰ unless the traveller can prove they have received a second dose of vaccine at least 14 days prior to entering the territory ⁴²	14 days, as per federal guidance; testing required within 72 hours of arrival and again on day 8 of isolation/quarantine ^{100,101}	Follow-up via YCDC ¹²⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical service workers who left Yukon to perform duties, and who must immediately attend work upon return, may go to work only and isolate when not at work • Residents of Yukon or the BC-Yukon border area who have travelled only within the BC-Yukon border area in the 14 days prior to entry into Yukon¹²⁰

Table 7. Household bubble requirements, school closures, and provincial border restrictions as of May 28, 2021

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Household bubble requirements	School closures	Provincial border restrictions
<i>AB</i>	Close contacts are limited to household contacts only; people who live alone can have up to 2 close contacts ¹²¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools closed (kindergarten – grade 12) All post-secondary institutions closed Child care facilities remain open¹²¹ 	None
<i>BC</i>	In a household of more than one person, you may not socialize with anyone else outside of the household. If you live alone, you can have a core bubble of a maximum of the same two people. ⁴⁶	<p>K-12 schools remain open with learning groups implemented.¹²²</p> <p>Post-secondary institutions plan to return to on-campus learning in the fall¹²³</p>	All travel should be essential; fines can be given to those who leave their region within the province ¹⁰²
<i>MB</i>	No social gatherings beyond those who live in your household ¹²⁴	All kindergarten to Grade 12 schools in the City of Winnipeg and the City of Brandon will move to remote learning effective Wednesday, May 12 until May 30. 27 schools in the Garden Valley and Red River Valley School Districts will move to remote learning effective May 18 until May 30. ¹²⁵	None
<i>NB</i>	Household bubble is expanded to include 15 contacts (Steady15) from outside your household ¹²⁶	All educational and camp facilities are open under appropriate public health guidance, virtual to be used for at-risk groups. ¹²⁶	People entering NB must have an approved reason for entry; frequent travellers may apply for a frequent traveller pass ¹²⁷
<i>NL</i>	NL is currently at Alert Level 2; in Alert Level 2, your household bubble can interact with up to 20 close, consistent contacts from outside your household (Steady 20) ¹²⁸	In Alert Level 2, schools remain open (K12) and childcare facilities remain open. ⁵¹	None

Province/ Territory	Household bubble requirements	School closures	Provincial border restrictions
NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering (indoors and outdoors) limited to your household without social distancing and masks. Two smaller households with 1-2 people in each can gather without distancing and masks • An individual can gather with someone from another household for an outdoor activity while socially distancing • People can participate in outdoor recreational activities hosted by fitness and recreation businesses with up to 5 people max or multiple groups of 5 people with 2m between participants and groups • People can engage in 1:1 outdoor lessons for sports and arts and culture with 2m distance between people during lesson • Wedding ceremonies and funerals can have up to 5 people plus celebrant with social distancing <p>Mental health and addictions support groups can have up to 10 people with social distancing and masks⁷¹</p>	<p>All public schools, pre-primary and private schools are closed in NS as of May 28, 2021, but will be opening outside of the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality on June 2, 2021^{17,129}</p>	<p>People must have approval before entering and only the following are allowed in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent residents returning home • People taking jobs as certain essential health workers • Post-secondary students entering NS to study or returning to their home after finishing university in another place • People following child custody protocol • People granted exemptions • People following the NS-NB travel protocol for work, school or child care • Certain rotational, specialized and federal approved workers¹¹² <p>As of May 21, 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People can travel between NS, NB and PEI under certain circumstances <p>People can move permanently to NS if they meet certain requirements and must apply first¹²⁹</p>
NT	<p>Households may have a maximum of 5 additional persons visit at any given time – to a maximum of 10 persons in the house. If you have a household of 2, you can have a total of 7 persons in the house. If you have a household of 6, you can only have 4 persons</p>	<p>NT is currently in Phase 2. In Phase 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who turn 19 after December 31, 2020 will be allowed to attend school in person for the duration of the school year. Students who turn 19 on or before December 31, 2020 will need to stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who are not exempted under the public health orders are not allowed to travel within NT • Checkpoints have been established at most highway border locations in the NT; each location has different restrictions¹³⁴

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Household bubble requirements	School closures	Provincial border restrictions
	come over. You can establish a friendship circle for indoor visitors to your house ¹³⁰	<p>attending school in person prior to their nineteenth birthday¹³¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full time, in-person learning as much as possible • Classroom bubbles for junior kindergarten to grade 6 • Physical distancing for grades 7-12^{132,133} 	
<i>NU</i>	All persons must maintain a distance of 2m from other people, except inside homes and between immediate family members ¹³⁵	<p>As of May 21, 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain schools will be moving to stage 2 on May 25; this means there is an escalated risk of COVID-19 transmission and increased restrictions put in place • Other stages are in effect for K-12 schools in Nunavut: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stage 4: schools in Iqaluit ○ Stage 3: Schools in Qikiqtani region, with some exceptions ○ Stage 2: schools in Rankin Inlet ○ Stage 1: Schools in 3 specific regions • All early learning childhood centres can stay open except for those in Iqaluit • All schools in Iqaluit are closed (stage 4) and will continue learning remotely¹³⁶ 	Only residents and critical employees will be allowed into the territory as of May 24, 2021 ¹¹⁵
<i>ON</i>	Gathering are limited to members of your household, but can include one other person who lives alone and/or a caregiver of any of those people; distancing of 2m should be	As of April 19, 2021, all publicly funded and private elementary and secondary schools are teaching classes remotely. In-person learning is available for students with special education	In order to limit the transmission of VOC, the government is restricting travel into ON from MB and QC with the exception of purposes such as work, health care services, transportation and delivery of goods and

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Household bubble requirements	School closures	Provincial border restrictions
	maintained with anyone from outside the household ¹¹⁶	needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning ¹³⁷	services or exercising Aboriginal or treaty rights ¹¹⁶
<i>PE</i>	Up to 10 individuals may gather indoors or outdoors for personal gatherings	None	Unnecessary travel to PE is not advised at this time; travel for seasonal residents of PE is paused until at least June 8, 2021 ¹³⁸
<i>QC</i>	In regions at Level 3 – Alert (orange zone) or Level 4 – Maximum Alert (red zone), people may not have visitors in their home from another address unless they live alone; ^{139,140} in regions at Level 2 – Early Warning (yellow zone), bubbles are limited to two households; ¹⁴¹ in regions at Level 1 – Vigilance (green zone), bubbles are limited to 10 people or three households ¹⁴²	All schools are open, with the exception of secondary and adult vocational training/general education centres in the Bas-Saint-Laurent regional county municipalities ¹⁴³	None
<i>SK</i>	Indoor gatherings are limited to household only ¹⁴⁴	Schools remain open with school testing plan which includes the targeted monitoring and testing of students, and priority testing for staff ¹⁴⁵	None
<i>YT</i>	Social bubbles are not restricted by household, and can include up to 15 consistent people, but indoor gatherings are restricted to a maximum of 10 people ¹⁴⁶	Each school follows its own school-specific operational plan; none are closed by the government at this time ¹⁴⁷	None

Table 8. Testing eligibility and requirements as of May 28, 2021

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Eligibility requirements for asymptomatic PCR testing	Eligibility requirements for rapid testing	Testing recommendations and/or requirements for people in isolation/quarantine
<i>AB</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone with symptoms • Close contacts of confirmed cases • Anyone linked to a known outbreak • As needed for outgoing travel • Anyone with a positive rapid test¹⁴⁸ 	Employers and service providers can apply to have rapid test kits sent to their workplace ¹⁴⁹	None, but close contacts with at least one dose of vaccine who receive a negative test on or after day 7 may leave quarantine early ⁶
<i>BC</i>	No asymptomatic tests, even if someone was a close contact of a confirmed case but without symptoms. Based on type of symptoms, instruction is to either stay home and monitor symptoms, or book a test, depending on the reported symptoms. If you were a close contact and have symptoms, get a test ¹⁵⁰	Point of care rapid test kits can be used as screening tools in certain settings to reduce the risk of an outbreak. For an organization to be approved for rapid test kits they must meet requirements set by the province to be a screening site ¹⁵¹	None
<i>MB</i>	Only symptomatic cases eligible ¹⁵²	Rapid tests are deployed to eligible organizations and workplaces ¹⁵³	If you become symptomatic during your self-isolation (quarantine), you will need to get tested and must continue self-isolating. If you do not have any symptoms after your 14-day self-isolation (quarantine) period and you have tested negative, you can stop self-isolating. ⁶⁸
<i>NB</i>	Self-assessment required for testing ¹⁵⁴	Unclear	If anyone develops symptoms of COVID-19, all household members must isolate and the symptomatic person needs to get tested for COVID-19. ¹⁵⁵
<i>NL</i>	Anyone with or without symptoms ¹⁵⁶	Unclear	Those who have completed 14 consecutive days with no development of symptoms may stop self-isolation. If Public Health requires that

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Eligibility requirements for asymptomatic PCR testing	Eligibility requirements for rapid testing	Testing recommendations and/or requirements for people in isolation/quarantine
			you have testing the results of your test must be negative. ¹⁰⁷
<i>NS</i>	Testing is available and encouraged for everyone, symptomatic or asymptomatic, and may be booked at any time ¹⁵⁷	Rapid testing is available and encouraged for anyone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged 16+ • Without symptoms • Who have not travelled • Who have not visited a potential exposure site, and • Who have not been in contact with someone who tested positive Regular rapid testing is promoted by Public Health ¹⁵⁸	People traveling to NS are recommended to get tested up to 3 times on days 1 or 2, 6, 7 or 8 and day 12, 13 or 14 ^{111–113} Anyone who has symptoms must book a test ¹¹³
<i>NT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who has any symptom of COVID-19 should contact their health care provider to be assessed for COVID-19 testing • If you or someone in your household is experiencing symptoms, stay home and call ahead to be assessed for testing¹⁵⁹ 	Anyone who is assessed as requiring a COVID-19 test may now get a rapid test ¹⁵⁹	Anyone who has any symptom of COVID-19 should contact their health care provider to be assessed for COVID-19 testing. ¹⁵⁹
<i>NU</i>	Unclear	Unclear	Following mandatory 14-day isolation, residents must receive a negative COVID-19 test before entering NU ¹¹⁵
<i>ON</i>	Only high-risk asymptomatic individuals, including asymptomatic individuals who have received a positive antigen POCT result, and	Unclear	Test(s) are required during isolation but no timelines provided ⁷⁴

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Eligibility requirements for asymptomatic PCR testing	Eligibility requirements for rapid testing	Testing recommendations and/or requirements for people in isolation/quarantine
	<p>individuals from targeted testing groups should be considered for PCR testing¹⁶⁰</p> <p>Asymptomatic contacts of a confirmed case should undergo testing at an assessment centre within 14 days from their last exposure or notification from the COVID Alert app¹⁶⁰</p>		
<i>PE</i>	Self-assessment required for testing ¹⁶¹	Rapid testing is available at some workplaces and/or for some types of workers ¹⁶¹	Everyone arriving in PE who is in isolation and is not already being tested by the province of PE, is required to be tested on days 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11. For a family arriving and isolating together, up to two people per family are required to be tested. ⁹⁹
<i>QC</i>	<p>Testing is available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone with symptoms • Close contacts of confirmed cases • Anyone asked to get tested by public health authorities • Anyone who received an exposure notification through the COVID Alert app¹⁶² 	Employers can apply to have rapid test kits sent to their workplace ¹⁶³	None
<i>SK</i>	Testing is available to anyone for any reason (symptomatic or asymptomatic); people experiencing symptoms are advised to get tested immediately ⁹⁵	Rapid testing is offered to organizations and businesses with priority being place on those most at risk of exposure ¹⁴⁵	None
<i>YT</i>	Self-assessment required for testing ¹⁶⁴	Rapid testing not available	None

Health Systems Arrangements

Table 9. Changes to health systems arrangements as a result of VOC, as of May 28, 2021

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Has PPE guidance changed for healthcare workers? If so, how?	Has PPE guidance changed for visitors? If so, how?	Has other infection control guidance (e.g., visitor restrictions, cancellation of surgeries, testing/screening of visitors/staff) changed? If so, how?	Has patient cohorting guidance changed? If so, how?
<i>AB</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ¹⁶⁵	No; ¹⁶⁶ immunized visitors are still subject to all PPE and distancing requirements ¹⁶⁷	Due to an increase in VOC cases, more stringent visitor restrictions may be enforced on a site-by-site basis ¹⁶⁷	Beta (B.1.351) or Gamma (P.1) patients can only be cohorted with other patients with the same variant; this does not apply to Alpha (B.1.1.7) patients, who can be cohorted with other Alpha or non-variant COVID-19 patients ¹⁶⁸
<i>BC</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ¹⁶⁹	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ¹⁶⁹	It is recommended that safety coaches are implemented in high-risk areas ¹⁶⁹	No, patients with confirmed cases of COVID-19 may be placed in the same room as other confirmed cases, regardless of VOC status ¹⁶⁹
<i>MB</i>	No, guidance has been updated since VOC emerged, but has not changed as a result of VOC ¹⁷⁰	No, guidance has been updated since VOC emerged, but has not changed as a result of VOC ¹⁷¹	As of May 24, 2021, during which MB was at Provincial Response Level RED due to the third wave, visitors are not permitted in acute care facilities, and essential care partner access is restricted ¹⁷¹ Capacity planning during the third wave of COVID-19 (likely linked to VOC) has included a virtual COVID outpatient program and an increase in alternate level of care/paneled patient transitions ¹⁷²	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Has PPE guidance changed for healthcare workers? If so, how?	Has PPE guidance changed for visitors? If so, how?	Has other infection control guidance (e.g., visitor restrictions, cancellation of surgeries, testing/screening of visitors/staff) changed? If so, how?	Has patient cohorting guidance changed? If so, how?
<i>NB</i>	Unclear	Unclear	Visitor restrictions depend on the alert level in effect at the time on a site-by-site basis ¹⁷³	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged
<i>NL</i>	No, guidance has been updated since VOC emerged, but has not changed as a result of VOC ¹⁷⁴	No, guidance has been updated since VOC emerged, but has not changed as a result of VOC ¹⁷⁴	As of May 13, 2021, visitation at LeGrow Health Centre and personal care homes in the Port aux Basques and Codroy area will be limited to one designated visitor for each patient/resident ¹⁷⁵ As of Feb 15, 2021, Central Health is implementing full visitor restrictions at all health care and long-term care facilities in the Central Health region ¹⁷⁶ As of Mar 10, 2021, Central Health would like to advise that it has lifted its No Visitation Precautions at the Valley Vista Senior Citizens Home in Springdale ¹⁷⁷	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged
<i>NS</i>	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ⁵²	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ⁵²	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ⁵²	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ⁵²

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Has PPE guidance changed for healthcare workers? If so, how?	Has PPE guidance changed for visitors? If so, how?	Has other infection control guidance (e.g., visitor restrictions, cancellation of surgeries, testing/screening of visitors/staff) changed? If so, how?	Has patient cohorting guidance changed? If so, how?
<i>NT</i>	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ¹⁷⁸	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ¹⁷⁸	<p>There is a chart that provides an overview of the current Community Health Centre and Public Health service levels. This chart gets updated every week on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.</p> <p>As of May 20, 2021, there are 4 community services operating with reduced capacity, 3 services open for emergency services only, 1 service closed, and the remaining services open and operating at normal capacity¹⁷⁹</p> <p>There is another chart to provide an overview of the current specialist service levels. This chart gets updated every week on Friday.</p> <p>As of May 18, there are 8 specialty services operating at a reduced capacity¹⁸⁰</p>	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged
<i>NU</i>	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged	No, guidance has not been updates since VOC emerged	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ¹⁸¹	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ¹⁸¹

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Has PPE guidance changed for healthcare workers? If so, how?	Has PPE guidance changed for visitors? If so, how?	Has other infection control guidance (e.g., visitor restrictions, cancellation of surgeries, testing/screening of visitors/staff) changed? If so, how?	Has patient cohorting guidance changed? If so, how?
<i>ON</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ¹⁸²	Visitors should follow provincial and facility policies, and a mask should be worn at all times ¹⁸²	For VOC outbreaks, or for rapidly expanding outbreaks where VOC test results are not yet available, all patients and staff should be tested for COVID-19 frequently (e.g., every 3 to 5 days) and tests should be prioritized to ensure a rapid turn-around time to guide outbreak management ¹⁸²	<p>Patients with COVID-19 due to Alpha can be cohorted with other COVID-19 positive patients (as long as there are no additional contraindications to cohorting)¹⁸²</p> <p>Patients with COVID-19 due to Alpha can be cohorted with patients who have resolved COVID-19 within the previous 90 days (as long as there are no additional contraindications to cohorting)¹⁸²</p> <p>Closing outbreak units to new admissions, avoiding non-essential transfers from outbreak units and restricting staff to outbreak units is recommended for respiratory virus outbreaks including COVID-19, but is particularly important for new and emerging VOC¹⁸²</p>
<i>PE</i>	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged
<i>QC</i>	Unclear; no centralized information available	Unclear; no centralized information available	Unclear; no centralized information available	Unclear; no centralized information available

<i>Province/ Territory</i>	Has PPE guidance changed for healthcare workers? If so, how?	Has PPE guidance changed for visitors? If so, how?	Has other infection control guidance (e.g., visitor restrictions, cancellation of surgeries, testing/screening of visitors/staff) changed? If so, how?	Has patient cohorting guidance changed? If so, how?
<i>SK</i>	No, guidance explicitly states that no changes are required due to VOC ¹⁸³	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ⁶³	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ⁶³	When patient requirements for private rooms exceed capacity, cohorting may be necessary. When strain type is known, patients should be cohorted with those who have the same variant (except for Alpha variant, who can be cohorted with wild type strain) ¹⁸³
<i>YT</i>	Unclear	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ¹⁸⁴	No, guidance has not been updated since VOC emerged ¹⁸⁴	Unclear

Discussion

This jurisdictional scan demonstrates that at the end of May 2021, provincial and territorial guidance was consistent across Canada in some areas, and widely variable in others. Most consistent were guidelines around the required duration of isolation and quarantine; least consistent were guidelines around provincial border restrictions. Variants of concern have had little demonstrable impact on public health and health systems guidance in Canada, except for in some cases in health systems in Alberta and Ontario. However, it may be inferred that any tightening of restrictions in Canada dated from the emergence of VOC (December 2020) may have been in response to an increase in VOC cases.

Health systems guidance was often inaccessible or difficult to locate. This was especially apparent in provinces without a central health authority. It is possible that such guidance documents are housed in internal guideline databases, and not available publicly, but this makes it difficult for members of the public to know what guidance is in place in the facilities they attend for care.

None of the guidelines retrieved for this report include any references to evidence. This makes it difficult to know what guided policymakers in their decision-making, and why approaches were so varied across provinces. Opportunities for future research will include retrospective studies of the effect of provincial public health and health system guidance on COVID-19 caseloads, hospitalizations, and deaths, and whether disparate guidance led to different outcomes. Furthermore, the provincial reopening plans that were announced during the writing of this report present a good opportunity to gauge the effects of vaccination rates versus other public health guidelines on preventing major outbreaks.

Limitations

This rapid jurisdictional scan represents a short snapshot in time, with resources limited to those retrieved May 19-28, 2021. It does not reflect changes in guidance after that date and given the rapid pace of change during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely to become out of date quickly. However, this snapshot does provide a picture of the variability in COVID-19 guidelines that was common across provinces and territories in Canada throughout the pandemic.

The guidance related to health systems arrangements was limited, for the most part, to what was publicly available on health authority websites, although it was supplemented by some additional documentation from select provinces from personal contacts.

Conclusion

Provincial and territorial guidance on public health and health systems arrangement during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada has been variable and has not tended to cite evidence. In future, we would encourage policymakers and public health officials to be forthcoming with the evidence they use to guide their decision-making, and to better communicate with their fellow Canadians to promote a more unified approach to epidemic and pandemic response.

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