

Vaccine Passports: Canadians show strong support for use in international travel, fewer willing to comply at home

Personal concern over contracting COVID-19 dips, but even vaccinated Canadians remain anxious

May 26, 2021 – As some provinces loosen community restrictions and unveil post-pandemic reopening plans, Canadians may be forgiven for day-dreaming about future days of free movement and travel. But a return to the “good old days” will come with new realities.

As discussions of “vaccine passports” – certification that an individual has been vaccinated against COVID-19 – circulate in public policy circles, new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians largely accepting of the concept in various forms.

More than three-quarters say that they would support mandatory vaccination proof for both travel to the United States (76%) and for international travel outside Canada's southern border (79%). In each case one-in-five disagree.

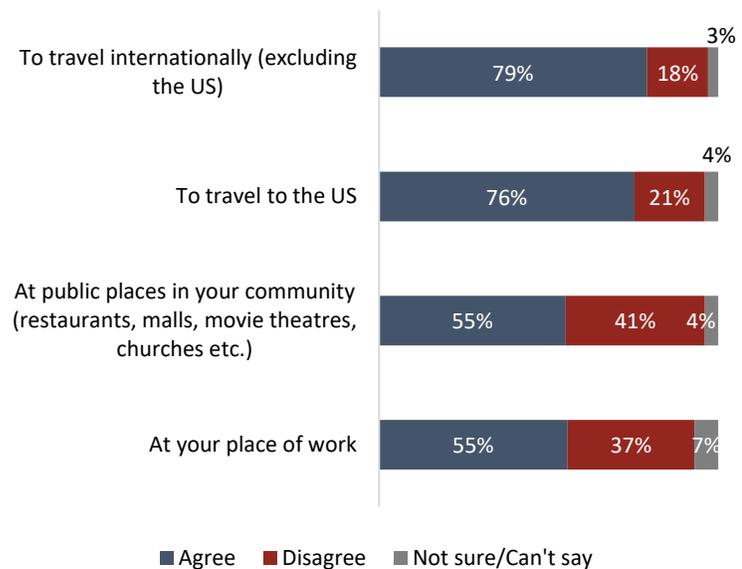
That said, there is a clear preference to reduce reliance on proof of vaccinations in domestic life when compared with international travel.

While a majority also agree that vaccine passports could be used at public places in their communities, like restaurants, malls and movie theatres, two-in-five (41%) oppose the idea – suggesting much more difficult implementation.

More broadly, Canadians continue to voice meagre support for opening up international travel, with one significant exception. Those who travelled regularly before the pandemic are far more likely to say that the Canada-U.S. border should have been opened after the long-weekend (37%) compared to those who did not take any international trips from 2018 to 2020 (16%).

Overall, 48 per cent would keep the border closed until September, though the more they travelled pre-pandemic, the more likely Canadians are to say that it should be opened sooner.

For each of the following scenarios or places, do you agree or disagree that proof of vaccination should be mandatory?
(All respondents, n=1,601)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from May 14 – 17, 2021 among a representative randomized sample of 1,601 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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More Key Findings:

- Making vaccination proof mandatory in various parts of society would not convince many anti-vaccination individuals to get their jab. Just eight per cent among this group say it would make them more likely to be inoculated
- 59 per cent of Canadians are concerned about potentially contracting COVID-19, down seven points from April to the lowest point since last July. Notably, 64 per cent of those who have received at least one dose of the vaccine maintain some level of anxiety about becoming sick
- Half (51%) say that international travel should be prohibited in Canada, unchanged from April. That said, just 40 per cent of frequent pre-pandemic travellers agree, while 60 per cent would not enforce travel restrictions

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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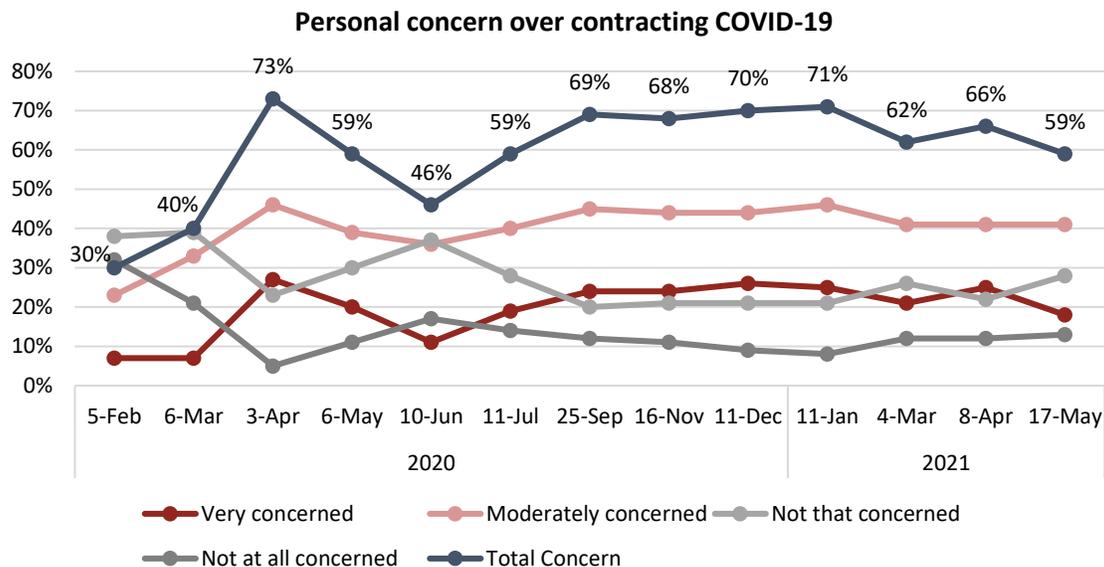
Part One: Concern over COVID dips, but even vaccinated Canadians still anxious

Across most of the country, with the notable exception of Manitoba, daily cases of COVID-19 in Canada are dropping. This, as vaccination rates increase, and [high willingness](#) among unvaccinated Canadians to get the jab. These factors have combined to reduce Canadians' concerns about becoming sick. Three-in-

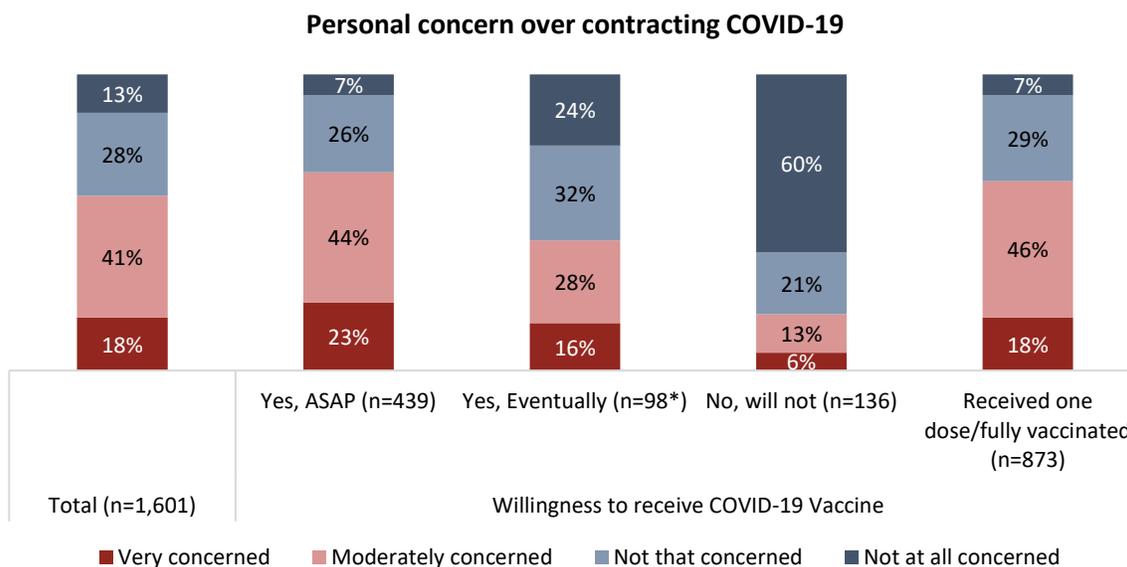
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five (59%) say they continue to be worried about personal illness, the lowest level recorded in almost a year:



As one might expect, concerns are higher among those who are anxious to be vaccinated and lowest among those who will not pursue vaccination at all. Notably, even a majority of those who have received at least one dose of vaccine are still concerned about becoming ill:

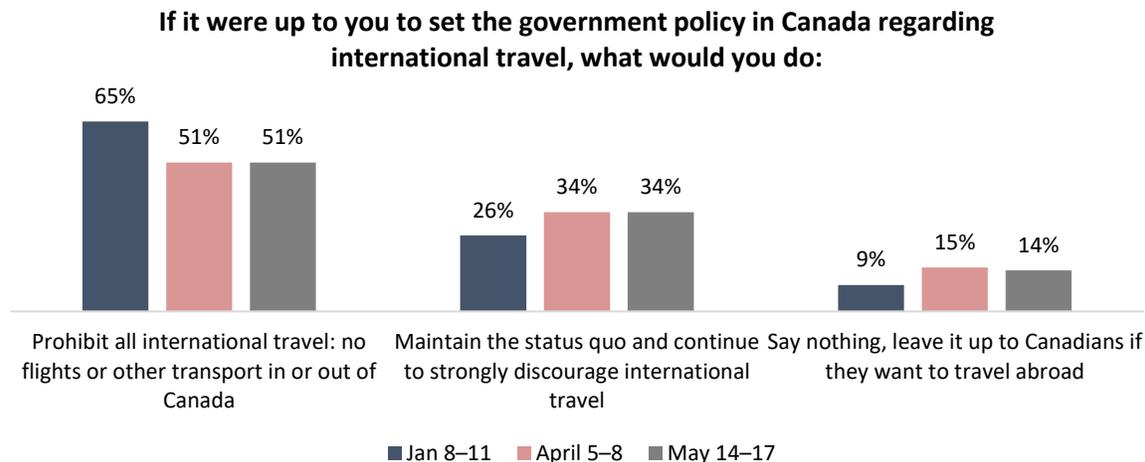


Despite the positive trends noted above, one-in-five Canadians over 54 years of age say they are still very concerned about personally contracting COVID-19 ([see detailed tables](#)).

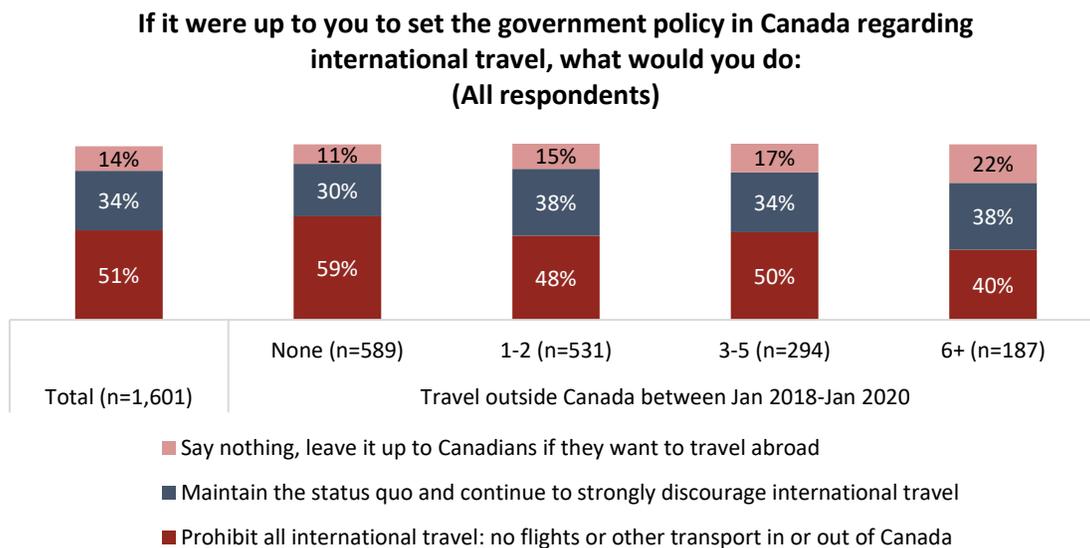
Part Two: Travel and the border

As Canadian communities begin to loosen restrictions, and as several provinces release [re-opening plans](#), a high level of opposition to opening up international travel continues.

Half of Canadians (51%) say Canada should entirely prohibit non-essential international travel; this proportion is unchanged from last month. One-in-three (34%) would strongly discourage international travel (which is what the federal government has been doing) but not ban it:



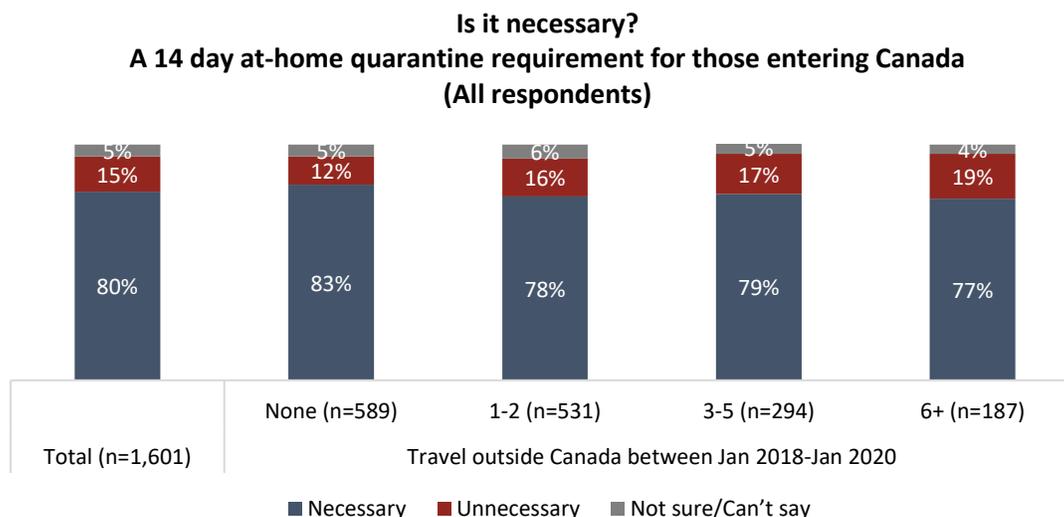
These views are by no means uniform. Consider that among those who rarely or never travelled internationally in the two years before the pandemic, a strong majority (59%) say that an outright travel ban is the best policy. Just 11 per cent of this group would have no government advocacy on this issue. For those who travelled frequently in that same pre-pandemic period, twice as many (22%) say there should be zero restriction or guidance on this issue, while a plurality (40%) say a ban on international travel should be in place:



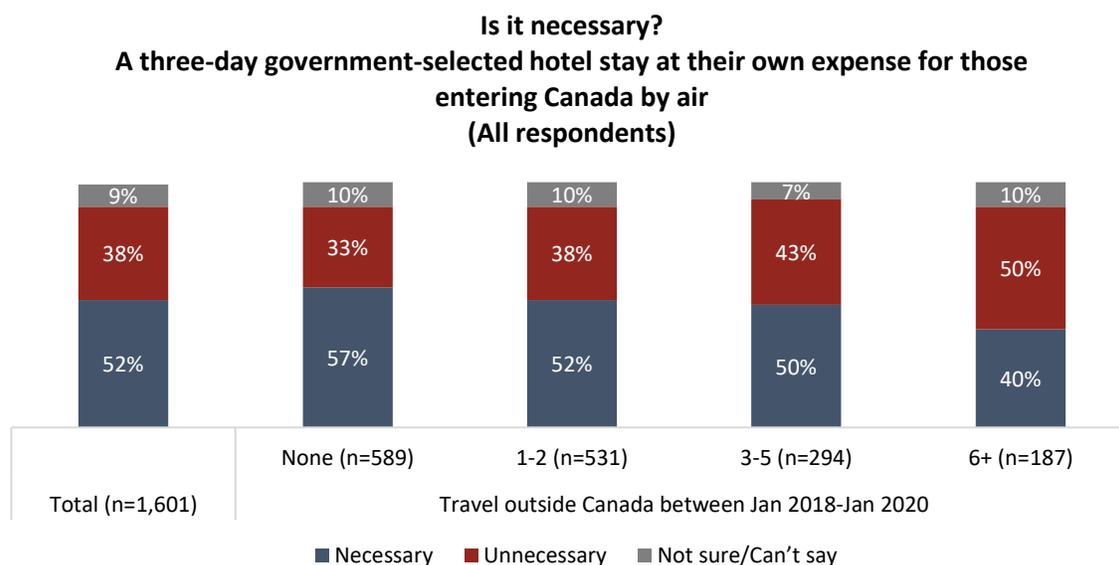
More frequent travellers less sold on restrictions

A keystone of the federal government’s policy aimed at reducing international travel has been its “quarantine” restrictions for inbound travellers. Anyone coming into Canada via an airport is subject to a three-day quarantine at a government-approved hotel – at their own expense – and a two-week quarantine at home.

That latter policy is relatively uncontroversial. Four-in-five Canadians, including those with different levels of travel frequency, agree that this is a necessary precaution for those entering Canada:

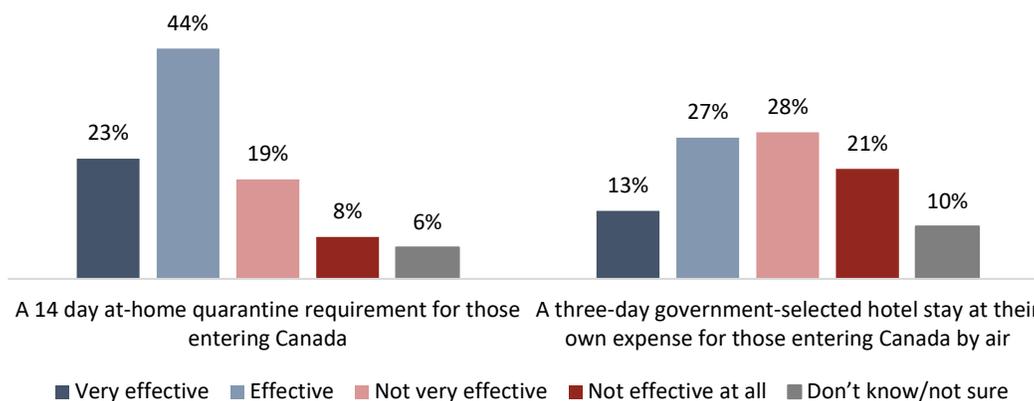


The same agreement is not found when it comes to a three-day stay at a government-selected hotel. Here just half (52%) feel the policy is necessary and this proportion drops to 40 per cent among frequent travellers.



One of the explanatory factors in differing levels of support for each policy is found in the perceived effectiveness of each. Just two-in-five (40%) say that holding travellers for three days at a sanctioned hotel will be effective at reducing the risk of COVID-19 spread, while two-thirds (67%) say the same of a two-week quarantine. The hotel policy has been criticized after evidence emerged that travellers were [circumventing it](#) by flying to American airports and crossing via taxis or limousines:

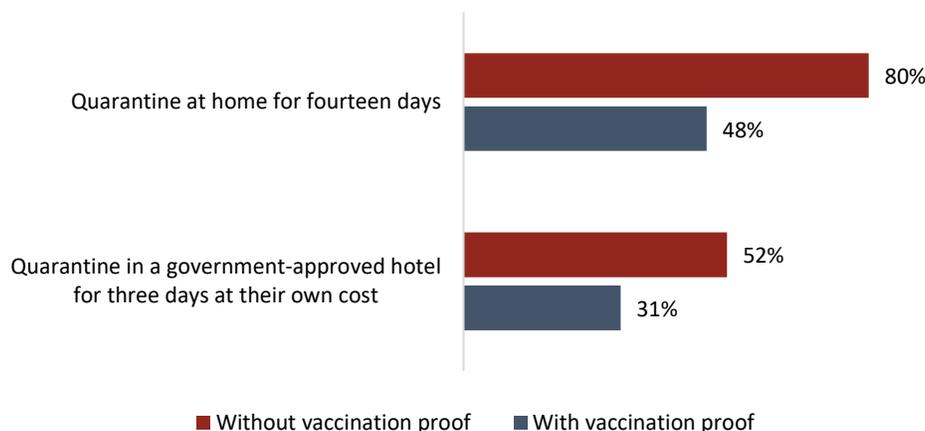
For each scenario, please tell us whether you think either has been effective at reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection in Canada (All respondents, n=1,601)



What about vaccinated travellers?

The picture changes considerably when vaccinations are entered into the discussion. Respondents were asked to reassess each policy with the caveat that the person entering the country now has proof of full vaccination. In each case, the percentage who think each should have to follow both protocols diminishes considerably:

Percentage saying each measure is necessary (All respondents, n=1,601)



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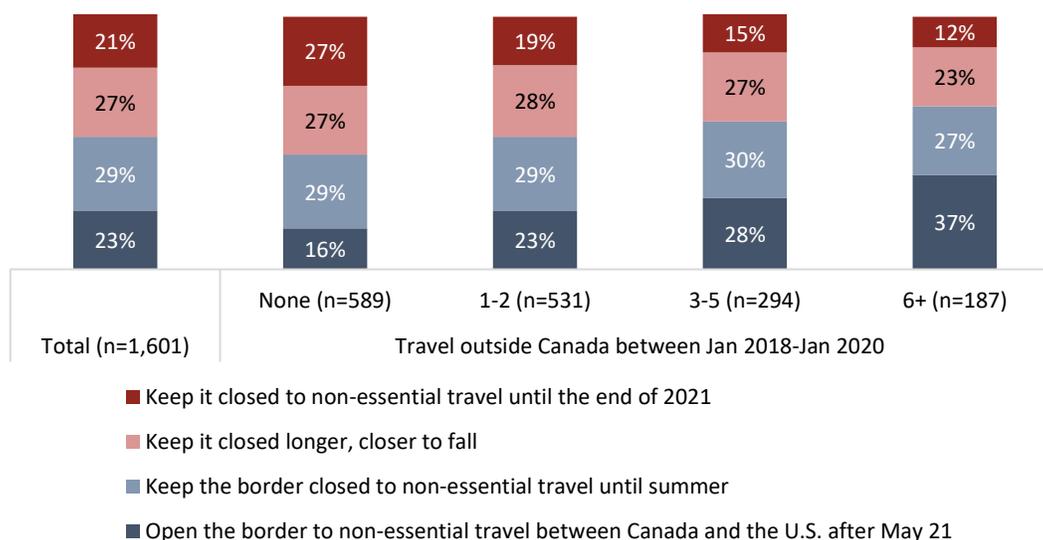
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Canadians still wary of opening border with U.S.

The U.S.-Canada land border remains closed to non-essential travel at least until June 21, dashing hopes of the nearly one-in-four Canadians who have been longing for a sooner-than-later return to cross-border road trips. Pressure is also on government [from the tourism and hospitality sector](#) as it comes to grips with the prospect of a second summer without tourists filling their hotel rooms, restaurants, and attractions.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has signalled he doesn't intend to re-open until [at least 75 per cent](#) of the Canadian population has been vaccinated. Whenever this milestone is reached, it will not come too soon for those who travelled frequently pre-pandemic. Non-travellers are more than twice as likely to advocate to keep the border closed until the end of the year:

The current land border closure is in effect until at least May 21. After that, what should the governments of Canada and the U.S. do? (All respondents)



Part Three: Proof of vaccination

Widespread support for international application

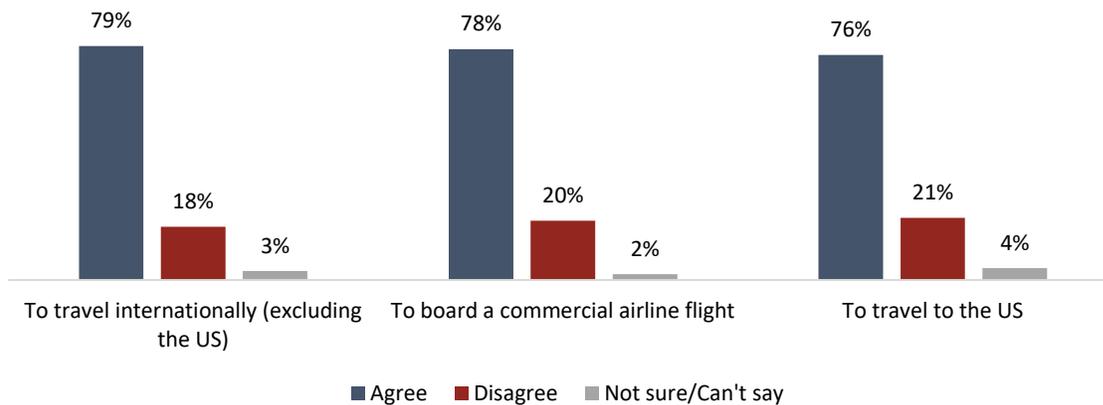
2021 is a year where Canadians, and indeed, people around the world, are [becoming acquainted](#) with a new term – “vaccine passports”. As some countries set a mass vaccination pace that has been faster than other nations, discussions have turned to travel restrictions and whether proof of vaccination should be needed to cross borders.

More than three-quarters of Canadians say a person should have to provide proof of vaccination in order to travel to the United States or internationally. A similar number also say they would make this mandatory for any commercial flight in Canada:

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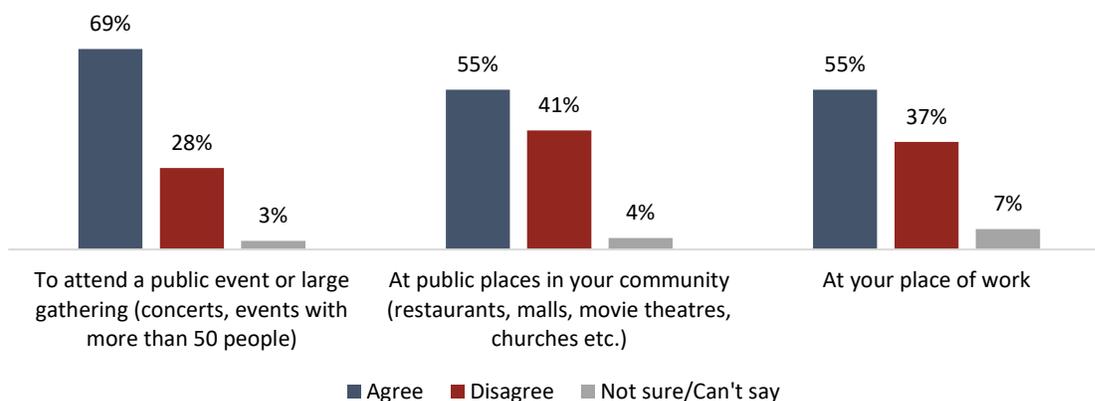
**For each of the following scenarios or places, do you agree or disagree that proof of vaccination should be mandatory?
(All respondents, n=1,601)**



Smaller majority support certification for domestic use

There is far more disagreement about how Canada may apply vaccine passports, or certifications, in other aspects of daily life. While seven-in-ten (69%) say they agree that proof should be provided if a person wishes to attend a large public event like a concert or anything with more than 50 people congregating, consensus drops to 55 per cent for public spaces such as restaurants or malls. The same number say they agree that it would be okay for workplaces to initiate this type of program:

**For each of the following scenarios or places, do you agree or disagree that proof of vaccination should be mandatory?
(All respondents, n=1,601)**



Perspectives vary relatively little across age and gender on this issue. Older Canadians are generally more supportive of vaccine passports in each area canvassed, but a majority of younger Canadians tend to agree with them:

Percentage that agree proof of vaccination should be mandatory in each of the following scenarios/places							
	Total (n=1,601)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=166)	35-54 (n=268)	55+ (n=320)	18-34 (n=191)	35-54 (n=295)	55+ (n=347)
To travel internationally (excluding the US)	79%	74%	71%	81%	79%	78%	86%
To board a commercial airline flight	78%	71%	68%	83%	76%	76%	85%
To travel to the US	76%	69%	66%	79%	77%	74%	83%
To attend a public event or large gathering (concerts, events with 50+ people)	69%	64%	59%	70%	73%	67%	77%
At public places in your community (restaurants, malls, movie theatres, churches, etc.)	55%	48%	51%	61%	55%	45%	64%
At your place of work	55%	49%	49%	60%	56%	49%	65%

Past Conservative Party voters are least likely to say that they would like to see vaccine passports become a more common aspect of Canadians' lives, though a majority support their use for international and air travel. Notably, a full majority of other major party supporters favor the use of these in all areas canvassed:

Percentage that agree proof of vaccination should be mandatory in each of the following scenarios/places					
	Total (n=1,601)	Federal vote 2019			
		CPC (n=491)	Liberal (n=461)	NDP (n=209)	BQ (n=107)
To travel internationally (excluding the US)	79%	68%	89%	84%	88%
To board a commercial airline flight	78%	65%	89%	81%	86%
To travel to the US	76%	63%	87%	82%	86%
To attend a public event or large gathering (concerts, events with 50+ people)	69%	56%	81%	72%	73%
At public places in your community (restaurants, malls, movie theatres, churches, etc.)	55%	44%	66%	58%	70%
At your place of work	55%	45%	69%	56%	60%

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Those against vaccination, against vaccine passports

Vaccine proofs are supported by a strong majority of those who have received at least one dose of vaccine so far, or who would like to be vaccinated as soon as possible. In each scenario, at least three-in-five among each group show support. The same is not the case for those who are hesitant to be vaccinated or say they will not be. In particular, those opposed to vaccination are far more likely to disagree that they should need to show proof to travel or enter certain places and events:

Percentage that agree proof of vaccination should be mandatory in each of the following scenarios/places					
	Total (n=1,601)	Willingness to receive COVID-19 Vaccine			
		Yes, ASAP (n=439)	Yes, Eventually (n=98*)	No, will not (n=136)	Received one dose/fully vaccinated (n=873)
To travel internationally (excluding the US)	79%	86%	58%	16%	90%
To board a commercial airline flight	78%	85%	50%	16%	89%
To travel to the US	76%	84%	51%	14%	86%
To attend a public event or large gathering (concerts, events with 50+ people)	69%	77%	40%	11%	80%
At public places in your community (restaurants, malls, movie theatres, churches, etc.)	55%	61%	29%	6%	64%
At your place of work	55%	61%	31%	8%	66%

*Small sample size, interpret with caution

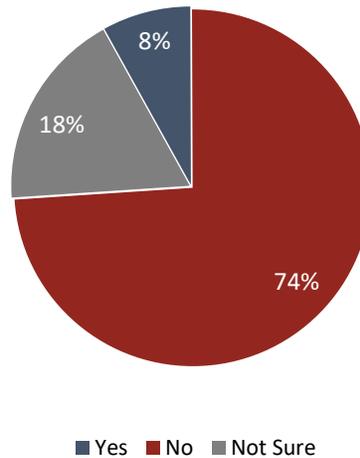
Mandatory passports wouldn't move many opposed to vaccination

While Canada's vaccination trajectory thus far looks to be taking the country into herd immunity levels, thought to be between 70 and 90 per cent, there are still some Canadians on the fence. If public policymakers are hoping to increase vaccination among this group, vaccine passports appear very unlikely to do so. Just eight per cent of those who are unwilling or unsure about the COVID-19 vaccine say that this would make them more likely to get a job:

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Suppose that vaccination certificates are required for many of these situations. Would that make you more likely to get vaccinated?
(Among those not willing to get COVID-19 vaccine or not sure, n=190)



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here.](#)

For detailed results by frequency of pre-pandemic travel and vaccine willingness, [click here.](#)

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