



British Columbia

Vancouver police will not be implementing COVID-19 vaccine mandate



Those who do not get vaccinated or disclose their status will have to pay for COVID-19 testing

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Vancouver Police officers pictured on Granville Street in Vancouver on Monday, April 20, 2020. The VPD will not be implementing a COVID-19 mandate for its civilian staff members and officers. (Maggie MacPherson/CBC)

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Though they will be encouraged to get fully vaccinated, the Vancouver Police Department will not be implementing a COVID-19 mandate for its civilian staff members and officers.

Sgt. Steve Addison, a spokesperson for the Vancouver Police Department, said not implementing a mandate was the best way to meet their staffing needs.

"Our expectation is fully that all VPD staff both sworn and civilian staff members will be fully vaccinated and they will declare their vaccination by the end of this month," said Addison.

"However we do understand that for a variety of reasons — it could be personal reasons, it could be health reasons — that there may be some people who choose either not to get vaccinated or not to disclose their vaccination status."

Addison says that those who have not disclosed their vaccination status will have to undergo rapid testing "several times a month" at their own cost in order to make sure they are fit for duty.

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The Vancouver Police Department's stance is a departure from other similar organizations. Last month, it became mandatory [for all RCMP members and reservists to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19](#). The Toronto Police Service mandates vaccines, and as a result [205 employees were placed on unpaid leave](#) after the vaccine mandate kicked in.

In B.C., there is a vaccine mandate for [all health-care workers](#) and [public servants](#).

Addison said he doesn't know how many staff members remain unvaccinated on the force.

"We have to look for what's best for our organization and our community and this policy meets our needs," said Addison, adding that the police service lost 20 officers who have left to join the Surrey Police Department.

"This solution [...] does allow us to continue to deploy anybody who chooses not to get vaccinated or chooses not to disclose their vaccination status and to do so safely."

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At a press conference Tuesday, provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry said it was the employer's responsibility to make sure their workplace is safe, and that the mandates they had implemented via public health order in the health sector is a good illustration of the effectiveness of vaccination as "the most important single tool that we have."

Health minister Adrian Dix added the Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health authorities have an over 90 per cent immunization rate for adults over 18, and that the vast majority of police officers in the region were likely to be vaccinated.

"It is of course up to their employer the appropriate way to make sure that workplace is safe," Dix said. "But we see the vaccine mandates that have been ordered by provincial health to be very, very effective."

With files from *On The Coast*

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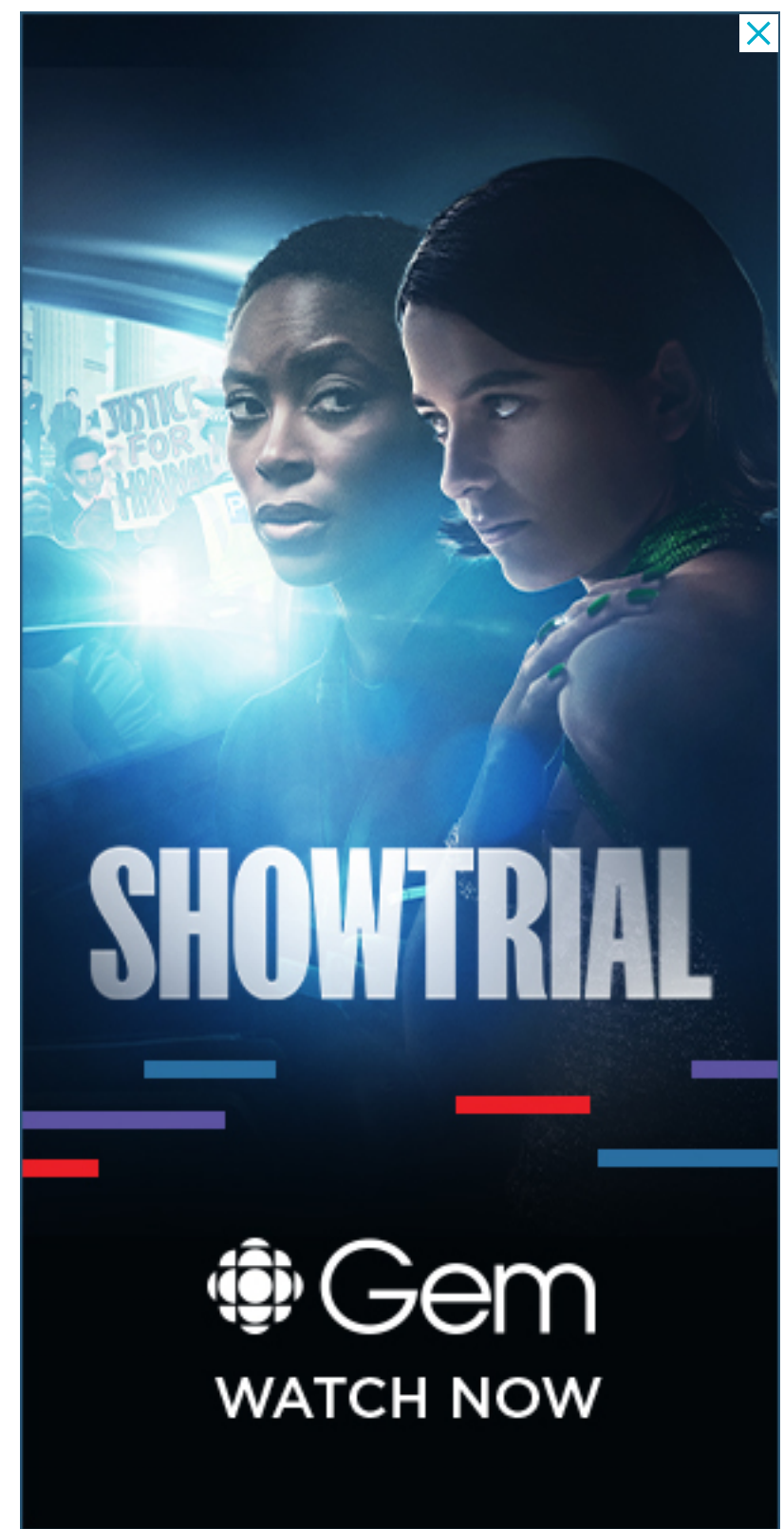
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