



March 23, 2021

Re: Prioritizing Distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine for Essential Pest Control Workers in Stage 2 in Accordance with the Recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI)

To Whom it May Concern:

Thank you for your commitment to protecting public health, defeating COVID-19, and working hard to distribute vital vaccines to the Canadian people. The Canadian Pest Management Association (CPMA) and our structural pest control member companies support the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recent recommendation of administering the COVID-19 vaccine first to residents and staff of congregate living settings that provide care for seniors, adults 70 years of age and older, beginning with adults 80 years of age and older, then decreasing the age limit by 5-year increments to age 70 years as supply becomes available, health care workers (including all those who work in health care settings and personal support workers whose work involves direct contact with patients), and adults in Indigenous communities where infection can have disproportionate consequences in Stage 1.¹

We applaud NACI's recommendation that once these individuals are vaccinated in Stage 1, other essential workers like pest control technicians be prioritized in Stage 2 so that they can continue to protect our food after it leaves the farm, hospitals and intensive care units from dangerous and deadly pests, and countless other places where pests jeopardize human health. The Canadian Pest Management Association would like to assert and reiterate that our pest control workers are essential and should be prioritized to receive the vaccine in Stage 2 pursuant to the recommendations of NACI.

Earlier this year, Canada's National Strategy for Critical Infrastructure identified structural pest control services as a critical infrastructure sector comprised of essential workers with:

"Workers such as plumbers, electricians, **exterminators**, escalator and elevator mechanics, home appliance service providers, and others necessary for maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences and buildings."²

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-prioritization-initial-doses-covid-19-vaccines.html>

² <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/crtcl-nfrstrctr/esf-sfe-en.aspx>

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the professional structural pest control industry continues to provide essential services to Canada's food production facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, food banks, shelters, hospitals, medical institutions, nursing homes, multifamily housing units, schools, universities, prisons, warehouses, homes, and businesses. We cannot afford to have our medical facilities, grocery stores, or homes uninhabitable due to pests and pest-related diseases.

The pest control labour force has been tested over the past year, as employees have become infected. A single infected employee requires that our member companies quarantine additional employees with whom he or she may have been in contact. This situation potentially leaves essential positions unfilled, extra hours for non-infected employees, and delaying vital pest control services for homes, hospitals, and businesses. The sidelined labour force could very easily result in contaminated food, a disrupted food supply chain, and out of commission precious hospital space and ICU beds as a result of a pest infestation.

You may have read in the news that rodents have adapted their feeding behavior and are more aggressive during the pandemic due to the altered lifestyle of humans.³ Additionally, bed bug infestations continue to occur in hospitals and ICU units, as they always have⁴, but now are overcrowded with COVID patients. There is not a segment of the food or medical industry that could comply with sanitation and health regulations without an adequate pest control program.

On behalf of our member companies, we are reiterating that pest control workers are essential workers in Canada. The thousands of men and women who have answered the call to provide their essential service of structural pest control should be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine during Stage 2 after the vulnerable groups in Stage 1. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to providing our essential pest control services and working with you to ensure a smooth vaccination distribution rollout.

Sincerely,

Sean Rollo
CPMA President

Christopher Day
SPMABC President

³ https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/rodents.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Frodents.html

⁴ <https://ucanr.edu/sites/practice/files/268461.pdf>