

POLICY TITLE	Council Chamber Visitor Screening
CATEGORY	Administrative
POLICY NUMBER	ADMIN-078
POLICY OWNER	Office of the Chief Safety Officer
ACCESS	Public

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out guidelines for security screening of visitors attending City Hall Council Chamber for Council Meetings, Public Hearings, Committee Meetings, and any other meeting of Council while ensuring that the Council Chamber remains open, accessible, safe, and secure for Council, all visitors and City employees.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all visitors accessing City Hall Council Chamber and 3rd floor lobby on days Council is meeting in Chamber.

This Policy has the following exceptions:

- A. Members of Council, City of Vancouver (COV) and Vancouver Public Library (VPL) Employees will not be subject to the screening process, provided they present their COV or VPL-issued photo identification access card to the security staff.
- B. Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers will not be subject to the screening process, provided they are in the performance of their duties and identify themselves to the security staff.
- C. Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) and BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) emergency responders will not be subject to the screening process, provided they are in the performance of their duties and identify themselves to the security staff.
- D. Key advisors to the Mayor’s Office, provided they present their COV-issued photo identification card to the security staff.
- E. Other temporary exemptions as defined in this policy.

DEFINITIONS

In this policy, the following terms have the following meanings:

“**Alarm**” is when a metal object is detected by either a Handheld Metal Detector or a Walk-through Metal Detector.

“Alarm Resolution” is the process of acknowledging a triggered alarm on the Handheld Metal Detector or a Walk-through Metal Detector and identifying the root cause of the alarm using visual cues and the assistance of the individual being screened.

“Bag” is anything that can be used to transport objects or belongings from one location to another. This includes but is not limited to bags, purses, backpacks, briefcases, packages, or other bulky objects.

“Bag Search” is a process of inspecting the contents of an individual's bag, or any other carried item for prohibited items.

“CoV Partners” are organizations that work closely with the City on an ongoing basis.

“Handheld Metal Detector” is a handheld device used by security officers to aid in the screening of individuals for metal objects and/or prohibited items. It is equipped with sensors that can identify metal objects.

“Key advisors” are individuals that work closely with the Mayor's office on an ongoing basis and who have been identified as a Key advisor by the Mayor's Chief of Staff or other delegate.

“Prohibited Items” are any items that may compromise safety and security. Further detail in Appendix A.

“Screening” is a process during which a Handheld Metal Detector or a Walk-through Metal Detector is used for the purpose of detecting prohibited items. This includes a bag search process whereby a bag is visually inspected for prohibited items.

“Walk-through Metal Detector” is a security screening device used to detect the presence of metal objects and/or prohibited items on an individual's body. The device consists of an archway through which individuals pass, and it is equipped with sensors that can identify metal objects.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Visitor Screening

- 1.1 The safety of all those who work, visit, or do business at City facilities is the top priority of the City of Vancouver.
- 1.2 Given the volume of people attending Council Chambers on days that Council meets, a screening process is implemented for access to the 3rd floor for those days.
- 1.3 All individuals entering the 3rd floor lobby and Council Chamber must pass through the visitor screening area and participate in the screening process with exceptions outlined in this policy.
- 1.4 Screening will include metal detection screening and bag searches.
- 1.5 Individuals subject to screening will not be asked to furnish any form of identification during the screening process.
- 1.6 The screening process will be carried out with the highest level of respect, professionalism, and without discrimination.
- 1.7 Individuals will be informed of the screening procedures through signage and verbal information and given an opportunity to voluntarily participate.
- 1.8 While all individuals retain the right to refuse participation in the screening process, access to the 3rd floor lobby and Council Chamber will only be granted to those who have completed the screening process.
- 1.9 Any individual who does not wish to participate in the screening process can view the council meeting, public hearing and/or committee meeting online or in the designated viewing area on the 1st floor of City Hall.
- 1.10 Individuals who have registered to speak but do not wish to participate in the screening process will be informed of alternative avenues to participate in the meeting.
- 1.11 Individuals who exit the Council Chamber and leave the visitor screening area are required to undergo the screening process again before re-entering, and for each re-entry.

2. Alarms

- 2.1 In the event of an Alarm being triggered during the screening process, security officers will initiate an Alarm Resolution process. This process will prioritize non-intrusive and touch-free methods to efficiently address and resolve the triggered alarm.

3. Prohibited items

- 3.1 Prohibited items will not be allowed past the visitor screening area. Individuals in possession of any prohibited items will be asked to remove or discard the items before undergoing the screening process again.
- 3.2 Individuals found with prohibited items have the option to utilize designated bins for the temporary but unsupervised storage of such items, or to leave City Hall to store the item elsewhere, before undergoing the screening process again. This ensures a seamless and secure procedure for all individuals.
- 3.3 Any item voluntarily and temporarily stored as noted above is stored entirely at the owner's risk. The City takes no responsibility for any lost or stolen items.
- 3.4 Any items not claimed after the meeting will be transferred to the City Hall Lost and Found.

4. Special Circumstances

- 4.1 **Service Animals:** Individuals with service animals will undergo the screening process with accommodations as required.
- 4.2 **Religious & Ceremonial items:** A religious or ceremonial item including kirpans containing sheaths not exceeding a maximum length of 7.5 inches or 19 cm (maximum length of blade may only be 4 inches or 10 cm), may be brought into the Council Chamber by initiated Sikhs. A kirpan must be identified by the individual possessing it as well as other religious or ceremonial items. A kirpan must be concealed and it must remain sheathed while in the Council Chamber.
- 4.3 **Mobility Assistive Devices:** Individuals who use a mobility device (i.e., wheelchair, crutches, cane) will be screened using visual and minimal-touch techniques.
- 4.4 **Prosthetics, casts, splints, and metal implants:** Individuals should advise security staff if they have any of these items. Individuals will be screened using visual and minimal-touch techniques to identify metal objects in an identified area.
- 4.5 **Medical needs:** People with medical conditions such as diabetes, anaphylaxis or severe migraines may enter with needles and other medical instruments that are required for their safety.

5. Temporary exemptions

- 5.1. Exemptions may be granted for government officials (local, provincial, federal and indigenous) and other dignitaries and their security detail, if applicable.

- 5.2. Exemptions may be granted for pre-approved guests to the Mayor’s or Councillors’ offices.
- 5.3. The Chief Safety Officer or their delegate must authorize other exemptions.

6. Exemption process

- 6.1. Requests for exemptions must be submitted to Corporate Protective Services for review.
- 6.2. All exemptions must be pre-approved and coordinated in advance with Corporate Protective Services.
- 6.3. Corporate Protective Services will assess requests for exemption, and the Chief Safety Officer or their delegate must authorize exemptions.
- 6.4. Government officials and dignitaries may be accompanied by a security escort or detail that may be included in the exemption. Security escorts or detail required to carry service weapons are permitted to enter with their service weapons.

Exempted individuals may be required to undergo modified screening procedures, including visual inspections or alternative methods deemed appropriate by the Chief Safety Officer or their delegate approving the exemption.

7. Complaints

- 7.1 Issues and/or complaints about the screening process can be sent to 311.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW HISTORY:

Version 1 approved by:	Chief Safety Officer	11/27/2023
	City Manager	11/27/2023
Version 2 approved by:	Chief Safety Officer	6/26/2024
	City Manager	7/2/2024

Next review date **7/2/2027**

Appendix A - Prohibited Items

Prohibited items include but are not limited to the following categories and examples of items:

Sharp Objects
Box Cutters
Ice Axes/Ice Picks
Knives - Except for Plastic or Round Bladed Butter Knives
Meat Cleavers
Razor-Type Blades - Box Cutters, Utility Knives, and Safety Razor Blades
Sabers
Scissors - Metal with Pointed Tips and Blades Shorter than 4 inches are Allowed, but blades longer than 4 inches are Not-Permitted
Swords - Cutting or Thrusting Weapons, including Fencing Foils
Sporting Goods
Baseball Bats
Bows and Arrows
Cricket Bats
Golf Clubs
Hockey Sticks
Lacrosse Sticks
Pool Cues
Ski Poles
Spear Guns
Guns
Guns
Ammunition
Firearms
Gun Lighters
BB guns
Compressed Air Guns (to include paintball markers)
Stun Guns/Shocking Devices
Starter Pistol
Flare Guns
Brass Knuckles
Gun / Weapons Replicas
Tools
Axes and Hatchets
Cattle Prods
Crowbars
Hammers
Drills and drill bits (including cordless portable power drills)
Saws (including cordless portable power saws)

Tools (greater than seven inches in length)
Martial Arts and Self Defence Items
Billy Clubs
Black Jacks
Batons
Martial Arts Weapons
Night Sticks
Nunchucks
Throwing Stars
Explosive Materials
Fireworks
Flammable Items
Aerosol (any except for personal care or toiletries in limited quantities)
Fuels (including cooking fuels and any flammable liquid fuel)
Gasoline
Gas Torches
Lighter Fluid
Torch Lighters
Strike-anywhere Matches
Flammable Paints (See Other Items below for non-flammable paints)
Turpentine and Paint Thinner
Disabling Chemicals & Other Dangerous Items
Chlorine for Pools and Spas
Fire extinguishers and other compressed gas cylinders
Liquid Bleach
Recreational Oxygen (non-medically required, flavored or canned oxygen containers)
Spillable Batteries - except those in wheelchairs
Spray Paint
Vehicle Airbags
Tear Gas
Self-Defense Spray (Bear Spray etc..)
Explosives
Blasting Caps
Dynamite
Flares (in any form)
Hand Grenades
Plastic Explosives
Realistic Replicas of Explosives
Self Defense Sprays
Realistic Replicas of Incendiaries
Tear Gas - Self Defense Sprays containing more than 2% by mass of Tear Gas (CS or CN).