

Negative COVID-19 test required for those flying to Canada

January 06, 2021

Pre-departure COVID testing requirement in effect

Effective January 7, everyone five years of age and older flying into Canada must test negative for COVID-19 before getting on the plane.

Travellers must take a COVID-19 molecular polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test within 72 hours of their scheduled departure to Canada. PCR test results must be from a lab accredited by an external organization (e.g., government professional association or ISO accreditation), which typically take at least one day to provide results. Proof of the negative test result must be provided to the airline prior to boarding a flight to Canada. Without a negative PCR test, travellers will not be able to get on board. At this time, proof of vaccination does not replace the requirement to obtain a negative test result. Those travelling from countries where PCR testing is unavailable will be required to report to a Public Health Agency of Canada quarantine facility and stay there for 14 days.

PCR tests will not replace quarantine requirements. In addition to the negative test result, travellers still have to quarantine for 14 days once they arrive in Canada, unless exempt from doing so under [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Quarantine, Isolation and Other Obligations\) \(P.C. 2021-0001\)](#), made pursuant to [section 58 of the Quarantine Act](#).

In addition to the PCR test all existing health requirements, including health check questions, temperature screening and wearing masks on flights to Canada are still required.

Despite being announced on Dec. 30, 2020 and coming into effect Jan. 7, 2021, details of the pre-departure COVID testing regime remain sparse, as the new regulations have yet to be finalized.

Mandatory use of the ArriveCAN app

Travellers are required [to use the ArriveCAN app](#) to provide mandatory travel and contact information, quarantine plans (unless exempt) and a COVID-19 symptom self-assessment. Individuals must submit this information through the app before they board a flight into Canada. Once travellers have submitted their information through ArriveCAN, a receipt will be displayed for travellers to show to a Canada Border Services Agency Officer (BSO) upon entry into Canada. Travellers can show the receipt from the app as a screenshot or printout.

Travellers who do not submit their information through ArriveCAN will not be denied boarding, however, they may face additional delays at the border for public health questioning and could face enforcement action ranging from verbal warnings to a \$1,000 fine.

Upon arriving in Canada, travellers will be required to use ArriveCAN to:

- confirm they have arrived at the address provided as their quarantine location within 48 hours of entering Canada; and
- complete daily COVID-19 symptom self-assessments until the completion of their quarantine period or until reporting symptoms.

Travellers who do not complete these reporting requirements may receive phone calls or public health follow-ups.

Additional measures by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)

Due to the new variant of COVID-19, flights from the United Kingdom into Canada were suspended until [Jan. 6, 2021, 11:59 p.m. EST](#). This prompted the CBSA to [enhance its presence](#) at Canadian airports to monitor international travellers who had been in the United Kingdom within the 14-day period immediate before they came to Canada.

Travellers are being asked whether they have been in Europe in the two weeks prior to **entering the country, and those who answer “yes” have been asked if they were in the United Kingdom during that period.** Travellers who confirm that they were in the United Kingdom are being referred to an official from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) for additional screening and questioning.

BSOs are also applying greater scrutiny to ensure travellers' quarantine plans align with the information they provided through the ArriveCAN app. Where any questions arise, travellers will be referred to a Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) official onsite at the airport.

If you have questions about how Canada's new COVID testing requirements for travellers may impact you or your organization, reach out to any of the key contacts listed below.

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