CONGRESSMAN
ED CASE
Hawai'i • District 1

U.S. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

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On November 8, 2021, the United States reopened its borders to fully vaccinated and tested travelers to our country for the first time since March 2020. Previously, federal restrictions on international travel prohibited visitors from 33 countries—including the U.K., China, Brazil, South Africa and much of Europe—from entering the United States.

The new international travel policy will allow air travel from previously restricted countries so long as the traveler provides proof of vaccination and a negative COVID-19 test. Travelers entering through the United States' land borders with Canada and Mexico will be required to show proof of vaccination, but do not need a COVID-19 test.

These changes will help restore more normal travel while limiting the spread of COVID-19. Lifting the international travel ban should also provide a much-need economic boost and support broader recovery in the tourism and travel sectors of our economy, including the hotel, airlines, restaurant and retail industries.

Travel Requirements

All nonimmigrant, non-citizen air travelers are allowed into the United States if they show BOTH proof of full COVID-19 vaccination AND a recent negative COVID-19 test.

Vaccine Requirements. Accepted COVID-19 vaccines from foreign travelers include those approved for emergency use by the World Health Organization, not just those being used domestically. That means that in addition to the vaccines currently available in the United States—Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson—the AstraZeneca (Canada), Sinovac (China), Covishield vaccine and Sinopharm vaccines will be also accepted. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) website for a complete list of currently accepted vaccines.

Testing Requirements. At this time, all air passengers ages 2 and older, regardless of citizenship or vaccination status, must show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 1 day before you travel into the United States from a foreign country. You must show your negative result to the airline prior to boarding your flight.

For U.S. citizens who have recently recovered from COVID-19, you may choose to instead provide documentation of recovery from COVID-19 (i.e., your positive COVID-19 viral test result taken no more than 90 days before the flight's departure from a foreign country and a letter from a licensed healthcare provider or a public health official stating that you were cleared to travel). Note: Proof of previous COVID-19 infection is not an accepted quarantine exemption under the Hawai'i Safe Travels program.

Exemptions to Travel Policy

The CDC has outlined several exceptions to the federal government's international travel policy for the following groups:

- **Children under 18 years of age:** International visitors over the age of 2 and under 18 and traveling with vaccinated adults must still show proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 3 days of departure. If they are traveling unaccompanied, they must show proof of a test taken within 1 day.

- **People medically unable to receive the vaccine:** Visitors who haven't been vaccinated for medical reasons will need to present a letter to the airline from a medical professional. There are also limited exceptions for visitors who need to travel to the United States for humanitarian reasons or an emergency, which will require a State Department letter before departure.

- **Emergency travelers without timely access to a vaccine:** Exemptions to the vaccination requirements are also provided to persons with valid visas (excluding B-1 business or B-2 tourism visas) who are citizens of one of the 50 countries the United States currently recognizes as having low vaccine availability and vaccination rates, including much of Africa as well as Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq and Armenia.

Other exceptions provided under the President's proclamation and CDC's order include: persons on diplomatic or official foreign government travel; participants in certain COVID-19 vaccine trials; those with limited COVID-19 vaccine availability; certain members of the U.S. Armed Forces or their spouses or children (under 18 years of age); sea crew members traveling pursuant to a C-1 and D nonimmigrant visa; and persons whose entry would be in the national interest, as determined by the Secretary of State, Secretary of Transportation or Secretary of Homeland Security (or their designees).

Verification Process

There will be CDC inspectors working at international airports to ensure compliance with the new federal regulations. Airlines are required to verify vaccine records and match them with an individual's ID. If they don't, airlines could be fined up to nearly $35,000 per violation. Airlines are also required to collect information about passengers for contact tracing purposes.

At land borders, Customs and Border Protection agents will be verifying that travelers meet the vaccination requirement.

All U.S.-bound travelers will be required to provide contact information such as e-mail, phone number and local address in the case of an outbreak following arrival.

Though it is not required, the CDC recommends that all travelers, domestic and international, take a COVID-19 viral test 3 to 5 days upon arrival at their destination.

For more information on these travel policies, you can visit the CDC's "International Travel" webpage or the State Department's "Travel" webpage.

Compliance with State of Hawaiʻi Laws

On November 8, the State of Hawaiʻi began welcoming international travelers consistent with federal travel requirements.

Direct International Travel to Hawaiʻi. The rules require that:

- Non-U.S. citizens traveling directly to Hawaiʻi from an international destination present **BOTH** proof of full vaccination **AND** a negative COVID-19 test result (NAAT or antigen) taken within 3 days of boarding a flight to the United States.

- U.S. citizens flying directly to Hawaiʻi from an international destination have two options:

    o **Fully vaccinated travelers:** Vaccinated individuals must provide proof of vaccination and present a test taken within 3 days of boarding flight to United States.

    o **Not fully vaccinated travelers:** Those not fully vaccinated must provide proof of negative COVID-19 test result within 1 day of boarding flight to U.S.

If international passengers fail to meet both requirements and if U.S. citizens fail to meet one of the two requirements, they will not be allowed to board their flight. Once in Hawaiʻi, the CDC will conduct compliance checks.

There will not be any additional State of Hawaiʻi requirements for passengers flying directly into Hawaiʻi from an international destination, but individual airlines will screen passengers prior to their departure to the United States.

Non-Direct International Travel to Hawaiʻi. As of November 8, international passengers entering the United States from another state or territory will be treated as domestic travelers when entering the State of Hawaiʻi. The Safe Travels Hawaiʻi program remains in place for all domestic travelers.

Currently, domestic travelers may bypass the State of Hawaii's mandatory 10-day quarantine by creating an online account, completing a health questionnaire and doing one of the following:

- Uploading your vaccination care or other documented proof of vaccination; OR
- Uploading a negative NAAT COVID-19 test result.

Tests must be taken by a Trusted Travel Partner within 72 hours of your flight to Hawaiʻi.

Consistent with the federal rules on international travel, the State of Hawaiʻi will now accept COVID-19 vaccines approved or authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, in addition to vaccines listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization. A list of currently accepted vaccines is posted on the CDC's website.

As of June 15, all passengers who are not in quarantine are free to travel between islands without restriction.

Frequently Asked Questions

What types of SARS-CoV-2 tests are acceptable under the CDC's Order?

Passengers must be tested with a viral test to look for current infection – these include an antigen test or a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT). The test used must be authorized for use by the relevant national authority for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 in the country where the test is administered.

A viral test conducted for Department of Defense (DoD) personnel, including DoD contractors, dependents, and other U.S. government employees, and tested by a DoD laboratory located in a foreign country also meets the requirements.

Does my proof of vaccination need to be in English?

Airlines and other aircraft operators must be able to confirm proof of vaccination and review other required information and should determine when translation is necessary for these purposes. If documents are in a language other than English, travelers should check with their airline or aircraft operator before travel.

Can I qualify for an exception to the proof of vaccination requirement for religious reasons or other moral convictions?

No, there are no exceptions under the Presidential proclamation and CDC's Order for religious reasons or moral convictions.

If I have tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies, do I still need proof of vaccination?

Yes, at this time all noncitizen nonimmigrant air passengers traveling to the United States, regardless of antibody status, are required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination. Only U.S. citizens returning from a foreign destination may be allowed to provide documentation of a previous COVID-19 infection with certain additional requirements.

I am not a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident; however, my child is a U.S. citizen. Will I be able to board a flight to the United States based on my child's citizenship status?

No. If you are not a U.S. citizen and are not an immigrant, you are required to show proof of being fully vaccinated with an accepted COVID-19 vaccine to board a flight into the United States. If you do not meet the vaccination requirements, you will not be able to board your flight, with few exceptions.