

Mobility: immigration alert

December 2021

Canada

Canada introduces new measures to address COVID-19 Omicron variant

Executive summary

On 30 November 2021, the Government of Canada implemented additional measures at Canadian borders to reduce the risk of importation and transmission of the new COVID-19 variant Omicron, which at the time of writing is being considered a variant of concern. Effective immediately and until at least 31 January 2022, foreign nationals who have been to certain countries in the Southern Africa region in the last 14 days will not be able to travel to Canada, and Canadians returning from the region will face additional measures regarding entry to Canada. Additionally, all travelers coming to Canada by air, regardless of country of origin will be required to obtain a COVID-19 test upon arrival at a Canadian airport in addition to their molecular PCR test. This is irrespective of vaccination status and is applicable to Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents as well.

Restricted countries

The countries of concern are from the Southern Africa region and as of 30 November 2021 are namely: South Africa, Eswatini, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Egypt, Malawi, and Nigeria.

Effective 27 November 2021, foreign nationals who have travelled in any of these countries within the last 14 days will not be permitted entry into Canada.

Canadian travelers (those who are Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and people with status under the Indian Act) regardless of vaccination or COVID-19 status, will be subject to additional pre-entry and arrival testing, screening,

and quarantine requirements if they have travelled in any of these countries within the last 14 days.

Additional Measures

There are currently no direct flights from the Southern Africa region into Canada, therefore these measures are directed at those arriving from a third country in transit to Canada who have visited the ten specified countries within the past 14 days.

Effective 11:59 p.m. EST 27 November 2021, travelers who have already arrived in Canada from the restricted countries within the past 14 days will be contacted and directed to be tested and enter quarantine while their test results are pending, regardless of vaccination status or a positive COVID-19 test history.

Canadian travelers presently arriving must now adhere to the following new measures, regardless of vaccination status:

- ▶ Travelers must obtain a valid COVID-19 molecular test in a third country within 72 hours before continuing their journey to Canada
- ▶ Upon arrival to Canada, travelers will be subjected to immediate testing, regardless of their vaccination status or having had a previous history of testing positive for COVID-19;
- ▶ Travelers will be directed to a designated isolation facility where they will be required to quarantine for 14 days
- ▶ Travelers must complete an additional COVID-19 test on day 8 of their quarantine



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Those arriving by air will be required to stay in a designated quarantine facility pending receipt of their arrival test result and approval of their planned quarantine location. Once a negative test result is received and their quarantine plan is approved, they will be permitted onward travel and may proceed to their quarantine destination.

Travelers arriving by land will be able to proceed directly to their quarantine destination if they have a suitable quarantine plan. A suitable plan will be one that ensures no contact with anyone they have not travelled with, as well as private transportation to the place of quarantine. If the quarantine plan does not meet these requirements or is otherwise not approved, they will be directed to stay at a designated quarantine facility while awaiting their test results.

The Government of Canada has advised there will be heightened scrutiny of quarantine plans for travelers from these countries, as well as rigorous monitoring to ensure travelers are complying with quarantine measures.

Travel from Other International Countries

In the coming days, all air travelers arriving from a country other than the United States, including Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents, will be required to obtain a COVID-19 test upon arrival at a Canadian airport regardless of vaccination status. This will be in addition to presenting the PCR test results already obtained from the country of origin within 72 hours of departure. Arriving travelers will be directed to an approved personal isolation location pending results of their on-arrival COVID-19 test. This test is free and not at the travelers' expense, though the PCR test remains at their personal expense. Unvaccinated travelers who have a right to enter Canada will be tested on arrival and be required to stay in a designated quarantine facility or other suitable location while they await the result of their test. They will also be required to obtain a test on day 8 of their quarantine.

What does this mean

The Government of Canada advises against travel to countries in the Southern Africa region and will be closely monitoring the situation to inform current and future guidelines. The Public Health Authority of Canada is also closely monitoring data through random testing of travelers upon arrival and continue to assess the evolving circumstances. Based on the variable nature of the situation, research being conducted and global trends, Canadian authorities may adjust entry requirements and border measures as required to keep Canadians safe. It is advisable to avoid non-essential travel to restricted countries and we recommend that potential travelers are aware of the possibility they may be unable to return to Canada should they visit these countries or any other countries, should the Omicron variant continue to spread and additional travel measures are implemented.

Should you have any questions with respect to these new measures, please do not hesitate to contact your EY Law LLP professional.

George Reis, Managing Partner
+1 416 943 2535
george.reis@ca.ey.com

Batia Stein, Partner
+1 416 943 3593
batia.j.stein@ca.ey.com

Roxanne Israel, Partner
+1 403 206 5086
roxanne.n.israel@ca.ey.com

Marwah Serag, Partner
+1 416 943 2944
marwah.serag@ca.ey.com

Alex Israel, Partner
+1 416 943 2698
alex.d.israel@ca.ey.com

Christopher Gordon, Partner
+1 416 943 2544
christopher.d.gordon@ca.ey.com

Jonathan Leebosh, Partner
+1 604 899 3560
jonathan.e.leebosh@ca.ey.com

Authored by:
Rebecca Narfason, Senior
+1 403 592 9943
Rebecca.narfason@ca.ey.com

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