



Reviewing the Most Common Requirements for Entering Any Country

As countries have started to reopen to international flights, there have been many new requirements that may begin to constitute a new or temporary “normal.” A few of the most common requirements are testing for COVID-19, passenger locator forms, health declarations, and a possible self-quarantine period. Each country has their own sets of requirements, which evolve day by day, so it is essential to continue to check for new requirements throughout the planning of an international trip.

COVID-19 testing is becoming a more common requirement as more countries begin to open and it is vital to get the correct type of COVID-19 test. The internationally accepted COVID-19 test is the nasal swab RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription polymerase chain reaction) test, which tests antigens of the COVID-19 virus. Other types of tests, such as rapid saliva tests, exist in the USA, but these cannot be used for air travel since these tests are only available in the USA and the integrity of the tests is still being disputed. Additionally, tests that detect antibodies of the COVID-19 virus cannot be used since they do not test for active infection of the virus.

One of the biggest challenges that face crew, passengers, and operators today is getting the COVID-19 tests during the timeframe required by the destination country. Some countries, such as French Polynesia, require a test within 72 hours of arrival. Some locations are reporting the turnaround time in the USA for tests as a week or more, but an excellent place to look is a private clinic that may offer quicker turnaround time for results in the 24-48-hour range. In the absence of a negative test result on arrival or with it, countries require a test to be performed on-arrival, such as Bermuda. Other countries may not allow entry without a COVID test at all.

Locator forms and health declarations may be required and may appear as many different types. Depending on the country being traveled to, they may need these forms to be completed online or on paper. If required by the destination country, the forms themselves, or the confirmations obtained online, should be carried by the person who completes them.

These forms are typically required by crew and passengers; however, for a quick-turn drop/pick up, they may not be necessary for the crew in some countries. For example, Mexico requires a paper passenger locator form and a separate health declaration to be completed and carried on person for both crew/passengers for all flights, including drop off/pick up quick turns. Alternatively, the Bahamas online health visa must be completed by all passengers/crew entering the country, but not by the crew on quick-turn legs. Information common to these forms includes name, address, address staying at in destination country, DOB, common health questions regarding any recent illness, and an agreement that all information on the forms is accurate.

While some countries, like the Dominican Republic and many countries in Europe (if you are traveling within the EU or Schengen region), do not have any quarantine requirements, some countries have them in place. The Bahamas recently reinstated a 14-day or length of stay quarantine (whichever is shorter) for anyone entering the country. This quarantine can be served on a private yacht, a private residence, or a government-approved hotel. Other countries interlace their quarantine requirements with the testing requirements. For example, if a person arrives in Bermuda with a negative COVID-19 test, they will still test on arrival, as mentioned above. The person must quarantine until the results of that test comes back negative, usually within 8-24 hours, depending on the time of arrival.

One of the most overlooked aspects of a trip is the return home. Many countries have separate testing/quarantine requirements for their citizens/residents upon the return home. For example, the USA requires citizens, residents, or exempted foreign nationals that have traveled to China, Iran, any Schengen country, United Kingdom, Ireland, or Brazil in the last 14 days to return to one of the 15 airports designated by TSA. Foreign nationals that do not fall into an exempt category are not allowed into the USA until they have been outside of these countries for 14 full days. If a USA citizen/resident has been in the above-mentioned countries, they are to be met by the CDC on arrival and may receive an order of 14-day quarantine. The decision to issue a quarantine order would entirely be up to the CDC official to meet the aircraft on arrival. If granted a quarantine order, those officials can travel home to quarantine at home.

We recommend reviewing each country on the trip route before starting the setup of the flight, as well as before the actual departure. The World Fuel Trip Support Team is available 24/7 to check the latest restrictions to support your trip requirements.

Sincerely,

Michael Kimmons
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