



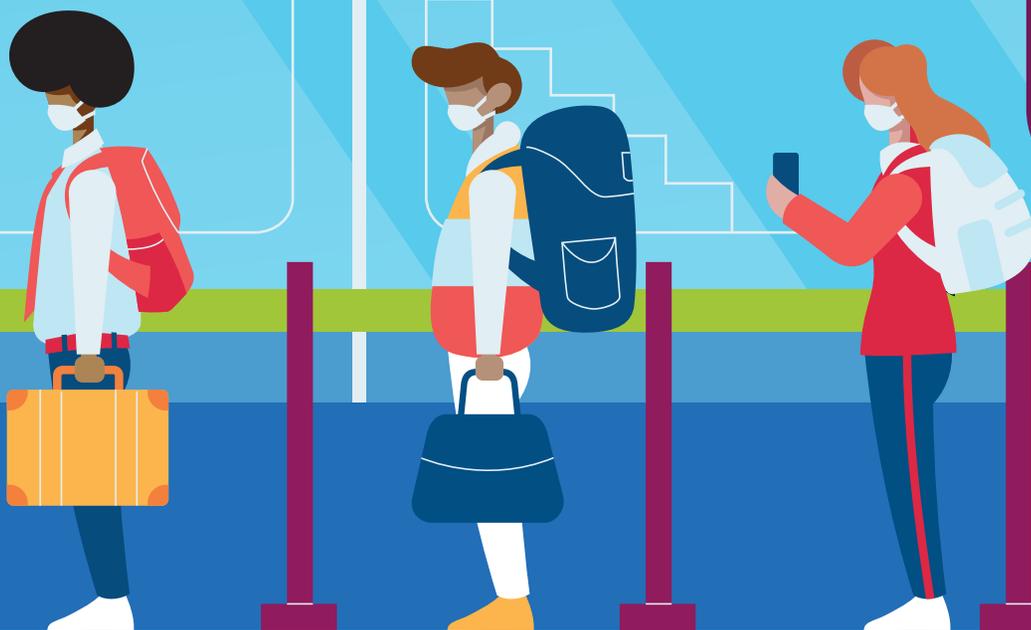
Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Health

THE NEW NORMAL

Guidelines for the Repatriation
of Nationals during the
Community Spread Phase of
COVID-19 in Trinidad and Tobago from
Medium/High Risk Countries

September 2020



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- **Dr. Osafo Fraser**, County Medical
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- **Mr. Lawrence Jaisingh**, Director, Health Policy,
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Directorate, Health Policy, Research and Planning.



1 Background



Pandemic outbreaks such as COVID-19 have the potential to destabilize and disrupt health systems and may have a profound effect on all aspects of a country's economy and the mental and physical health of the population.

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the COVID-19 to be a pandemic and as of September 4th, 2020, there were 26,171,112 confirmed cases with 865,154 deaths across 216 countries (WHO Situational Report).

In Trinidad and Tobago, as at September 4th, 2020, there were two thousand and thirty (2,030) positive cases and thirty (30) deaths with over twenty-one thousand, five hundred and twenty-seven (21,527) unique patient tests conducted. The key objectives of these protocols are to educate, engage and empower people to change their behaviour to ensure the transmission of COVID-19 is adequately controlled - the communities would be educated, engaged and empowered to adjust to the "new normal" utilizing the following protocols:

- Wear masks when you go out in public;
- Keep your distance from others (6ft);
- Stay home if you are ill;
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol based sanitizer;
- Cough into a tissue or into the crook of your elbow;
- Avoid touching your face; and
- Clean then sanitize surfaces (e.g. table tops, door knobs and cell phones).

The guidelines for returning nationals were sourced from World Health Organization (WHO), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for COVID-19. The key source document was derived from the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>.

¹<https://covid19.who.int/table>

2 Objectives of the Protocols

To provide protocols on the quarantine and care of returning nationals via Ports of Entry from Medium/High Risk countries into Trinidad and Tobago, to minimize the risk and interrupt the transmission of COVID-19 to our shores.

3. Legal and Policy Framework

On January 31st 2020, the proclamation of COVID-19 as a dangerous infectious disease under the Public Health Ordinance, Chap. 12 No. 4, in order to trigger the special provisions under the Ordinance and the Quarantine Act Chapter 28:05 that are pertinent to the curtailment and management of infectious diseases such as notification, special inspections and offences (Legal Notices Nos. 34 and 35 and excerpt from the Quarantine Act 7(1) appended). Also, the adherence to the 2004 Occupational Safety and Health Act, Chp. 88:88¹.

4. The Protocols for the Quarantine and Care of Returning Nationals from Medium/High Risk Countries (Cluster or Community Spread)

A country is considered medium/high risk if it is categorised as having ‘Clusters of cases ‘ or ‘Community Transmission’ according to the WHO classification system. For an updated list of the WHO COVID-19 county categorisation go to <https://covid19.who.int/> and click on the Data Table tab.

Given the 2nd wave of the COVID-19 with community spread, there is a need to mitigate and minimise the risk of spread of new strains of the virus from returning nationals in other countries classified as medium/high risk that is, those who have cluster and community spread, which may potentially affect the existing residential population. In this regard, returning nationals will be required to be assessed within a state quarantined facility and then self-isolate, where required.

¹https://rgd.legalaffairs.gov.tt/laws2/alphabetical_list/lawspdfs/88.08.pdf



In the first instance, the vessel Captain should report to the Port Health Authorities on the status of all passengers prior to disembarkation. This includes the thorough review of all related documentation. The County Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) should provide direct oversight of this process to ensure compliance.

Additionally, passengers will be subject to health screening by the Port Health Department, inclusive of the observation of the passenger for any noticeable signs or symptoms, thermal scanning and review the health declaration form for each passenger.

The above preliminary assessment will enable the Port Health Officer to conduct a risk assessment in order to classify the passengers for disembarkation by the degree of illness for the appropriate medical attention.

Three (3) categories of returning passengers have been identified and they will undergo State and Self-Quarantine as outlined below:

Category One – Returning Passengers (not requiring immediate medical attention)

1. Passengers are immediately taken to a designated State Quarantine Facility for seven (7) days;
2. Each passenger undergoes a medical assessment within 24hrs of arrival, which includes a medical history and test for COVID-19 (swab) within 1-2 days and thereafter on the 7th day;
3. Daily temperature monitoring and symptom checks are done by the on-site medical team at the quarantine facility;
4. Medical assessments are done twice per day by a health care worker at the State Quarantine Facility;
5. Passengers who test negative for COVID-19 and remain asymptomatic, are immediately sent home after the 7th day and will be self-quarantined for another (7) days;
6. Passengers who test positive for COVID-19 during the state quarantine period are immediately transferred to a facility in the parallel health care system for clinical assessment and assignment;
7. Passengers who test positive for COVID-19 during the home quarantine period will be transferred to a facility in the parallel public health care system, based on the discretion of the County Medical Officer of Health.



Category Two – Returning Passengers (requiring immediate medical attention)

1. Severe/Critically Ill passengers are quarantined at hospital (as per Global Medical Response of Trinidad and Tobago protocols for ambulance patients), which can accommodate their level of care with the following options based on clinic assessment:
 - a. if patients require less than 7 days for stabilisation/recovery, they should be transferred to a quarantine facility to complete the 7-day period and treated under the same protocols as described in Category One; and
 - b. if patients require more than 7 days for stabilisation/recovery, they should be tested (swabbed) in hospital in this first instance, and if negative be transferred to the hospital where non-COVID-19 protocols are observed.
2. Passengers who are ill but stable and in need of outpatient medical management (e.g. clinic visits for cancer treatment and Non-Communicable Disease treatment) should be transferred to a designated quarantine facility and treated under the same protocols as described in Category One. These passengers will be transported to and from hospital for treatment for their illness via ambulance when necessary; and
3. Passengers who test positive for COVID-19 (either upon arrival in Trinidad and Tobago or during the quarantine period) are immediately transferred to a hospital in the parallel health care system for treatment.

Category Three – Children (minors under the age of 16)

1. If displaying no symptoms, returning children will undergo Self-Quarantine as detailed in Category One;
2. If displaying mild symptoms that are not COVID-19 related, returning children will undergo treatment at State Quarantine at a designated quarantine facility, as detailed in Category One;
3. If displaying severe symptoms, returning children will undergo treatment as outlined in Category Two;



4. If the test is positive for COVID-19, returning children are immediately transferred to a hospital in the parallel health care system for clinical assessment and assignment;
5. All treatment will be based on the outcomes of the testing results; and
6. One parent/guardian will be allowed to enter quarantine with the child in question.

5. Implementation of the Protocols

The County Medical Officers of Health (CMOHs) will officially communicate the protocols for returning nationals to Port Health Officers, and ensure compliance as it relates to the documentation and the treatment and care for returning nationals. Thereafter, continuous assessment and reporting on the adherence of these protocols should be implemented to ensure full compliance.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The CMOHs will provide continuous assessment and reporting to the Chief Medical Officer on the implementation of these protocols through continuous site visits and inspection of the Ports of Entry. This is to ensure the strict adherence to the protocols for the entry of returning nationals as they may pose a higher risk of spread of COVID-19.

7. Reference

- i. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 25th, 2020, 'After You Travel'.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>.

8. Covid Related Numbers

General		
Entity	No. for COVID-19 Matters	
Ministry of Health	800-WELL (9355) 877-WELL (9355)	
Tobago Regional Health Authority	800-HEAL (4325)	
Eastern Regional Health Authority	877-ERHA (3742)	
South West Regional Health Authority	87-SWRHA (79742)	
Emergency Ambulance Services	811	
Police Hotline (Quarantine breaches)	999 OR 555	
County Medical Offices of Health		
Location	Contact #	Address
CMOH – St. George West	624-3439 625-4151	#3, Jerningham Place, Belmont
CMOH – St. George East	667-5273/3693/6688	Queen Mary Avenue, Arima
CMOH – Nariva/Mayaro	225-5005 Ext. 3003	Narine Ramrattan Building, Naparima Mayaro Road, Mayaro
CMOH – Victoria	653-0515 652-2716	60, Pointe-a-Pierre Road, Vistabella, San Fernando
CMOH – Tobago	639-3751	C/o Scarborough Health Centre, Tobago
CMOH – St. Andrew/St. David	668-2053-55	Cor. Blake Avenue & Eastern Main Road, Guaico
CMOH – Caroni	226-4400 Ext. 4402	Southern Main Road, Couva
CMOH – St. George Central	258-8992	Cor. Hassanali Street & El Socorro Main Road, San Juan
CMOH – St. Patrick	649-2056	Allies Street, Health Administration Build- ing, Siparia