

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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France – COVID-19: Travel Restrictions to Enter France Reinforced

This *GMS Flash Alert* provides an update on travel restrictions applying to entry into France due to the COVID-19 situation. Of particular note, there are new restrictions for individuals travelling to France from India, Argentina, and other countries.

WHY THIS MATTERS

These travel restrictions have a considerable impact on travellers and globally-mobile employees between France and other countries.

Travel has been restricted since April 2020 and a “compelling reasons regime” is in force since 31 January 2021, at midnight.

To deal with the virus and contain the introduction of its variants, stricter border control measures are temporarily in effect since 24 April 2021, depending on the country of departure.

These rules are updated regularly by the French government and so travellers and global mobility services personnel must keep informed accordingly.

It is advisable that travellers – including mobile employees – consult with their travel agents and immigration counsel prior to making plans for travel to France.

Context

In the context of the COVID-19 health situation in France, restrictions on access to mainland France and its overseas departments and territories have been put in place.¹

No Travel Restrictions for Travellers from EU Countries, PCR Testing

Passengers travelling from European Union (EU) member states, Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and The Vatican may enter France.

However, for all types of travel (arrival by road, rail, air, or sea), travellers must show a negative "COVID RT-PCR" test carried out less than 72 hours prior to departure. Road carriers, frontier workers, and residents of frontier areas within a radius of 30 km from their homes are exempt from this obligation.

- Any traveller aged 11 years and older must also complete a declaration of honour (*déclaration sur l'honneur*) certifying that:
 - he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
 - he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip;
 - he or she agrees to a test or a biological virological screening test for detection of SARS-CoV-2 to be carried out upon his or her arrival on French national territory.
- Where a virology screening (RT-PCR) test cannot be conducted in the country of departure, the traveller may request a specific document known as "PCR Test Waiver" from the French embassy or consulate, subject to giving a compelling reason for travel (reserved for a restricted number of cases) and prior acceptance of:
 - a virological screening test for SARS-CoV-2 (antigen test) upon arrival;
 - seven-days isolation in one of the facilities designated by the French authorities, with presentation of proof of booking;
 - an RT-PCR virological screening test at the end of the isolation period – in countries where antigen tests are available, the "PCR Test Waiver" shall only be valid if supported by the result of such a test, carried out less than 72 hours before boarding and showing no COVID-19 contamination.
- Any traveller under the age of 11 must have a declaration of honour certifying:
 - he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
 - he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip.
- Travellers arriving from a country within the European Union but who within 14 days of arrival have stayed in a country outside of the European Union must follow the procedure applicable to travellers arriving from a country outside the European Area (test PCR, compelling reasons, and quarantine of seven days).

Travel Restrictions from an Authorised Country Outside the European Area: Australia, South Korea, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Singapore

Since 15 March 2021, travellers from Australia, South Korea, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Singapore are no longer subject to the "compelling reason regime."

However, travellers must show a negative "COVID RT-PCR" test carried out less than 72 hours prior to the departure.

- Any traveller aged 11 years and older must also complete a declaration of honour certifying that:
 - he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
 - he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip;
 - he or she accepts that a test or a biological virological screening for detection of SARS-CoV-2 can be carried out upon his or her arrival on the national territory;
 - he or she agrees to voluntarily isolate for seven days after arrival in metropolitan France and to carry out a virological screening test (PCR) at the end of this period.
- Where a virology screening (RT-PCR) test cannot be conducted in the country of departure, the traveller may request a specific document known as "PCR Test Waiver" from the French embassy or consulate, subject to giving a compelling reason for travel (reserved for a restricted number of cases) and prior acceptance of:
 - a virological screening test for SARS-CoV-2 (antigen test) upon arrival;
 - seven-days isolation in one of the facilities designated by the French authorities, with presentation of proof of booking;
 - an RT-PCR virological screening test at the end of the isolation period – in countries where antigen tests are available, the "PCR Test Waiver" shall only be valid if supported by the result of such a test, carried out less than 72 hours before boarding and showing no COVID-19 contamination.
- Any traveller under the age of 11 must have a declaration of honour certifying:
 - he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
 - he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip.
 - he or she agrees to voluntarily isolate for seven days following arrival in Metropolitan France.

Travellers arriving from these countries who within 14 days of arrival have stayed in a country outside of the European Union must follow the procedure applicable to travellers arriving from a country outside the European Area (test PCR, compelling reasons, and quarantine of seven days).

Stricter Travel Restrictions Affecting Travel from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, South Africa, and India

Travellers from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, South Africa, and India are now subject to the stricter regime of compelling reasons (the indicative list of compelling reasons appears on travel certificates) (see the travel certificates in the link of the footnote).

In authorised cases, all travellers are required to complete and hold a certificate indicating the reason for their trip.

Stricter compelling reasons are indicated on the certificate as follows:

1. French citizen, and his or her spouse (married, civil union or cohabiting partner) and their children;

2. Citizen of the European Union or equivalent, and his or her spouse (married, civil union, or cohabiting partner) and their children, whose main residence is in France;
3. Citizen of a third country who is a holder of a valid French or European residence permit or long-stay visa, who has his or her main residence in France (valid only if the travel abroad took place prior to 31 January 2021 or was justified by a compelling reason);
4. Citizen of a third country holding a long-stay visa issued for the purpose of family reunion or reunification of refugee families, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and stateless persons;
5. Land, sea, and air transport sector workers or transport service providers, including drivers of vehicles carrying goods intended for use in the territory, as well as those who are only in transit, or travelling as passengers returning to their home base or for training purposes;
6. Foreign citizen working in a diplomatic or consular mission, or an international organisation with headquarters or an office in France, as well as his or her partner and their children;
7. Traveller in transit in the international zone for less than 24 hours.

Travellers from these countries are also subject to a quarantine or isolation measure that will be prescribed in a prefectural decree upon arrival in France for a 10-day period, and which will be accompanied by a restriction on the hours for leaving the place of isolation (except in the case of transit in an international zone).

They must indicate on the travel certificate the place where they intend to undertake the quarantine or isolation measure which shall be prescribed upon their arrival as follows:

- A. At "my home," producing a supporting document to prove the address, stating, as the case may be, the provisions for access, permitting inspectors to check compliance with the quarantine or isolation measure (building entry code);
- B. In appropriate accommodation (hotel or similar), producing a supporting document to prove the address, stating, as the case may be, the provisions for access, permitting inspectors to check compliance with the quarantine or isolation measure (building entry code);
- C. In accommodation provided by the authorities (territorial isolation support units have been set up to support persons placed in isolation);
- D. Not applicable (in the case of transit in an international zone).

Furthermore, for all types of travel, travellers must show a negative "COVID RT-PCR" test carried out less than 36 hours before departure (i.e., departure of the first flight in case of a connecting flight), or if not possible, a test conducted less than 72 hours before departure and an antigen test conducted less than 24 hours before departure whose results (for both) are negative for infection with COVID-19.

Any traveller aged 11 years old must also complete a declaration of honour certifying that:

- he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
- he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip;
- he or she agrees to undergo an antigen test or any screening upon arrival on French national territory;
- Any traveller under the age of 11 must have a declaration of honour certifying:

- he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
- he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip.

Travel Restrictions from Other Countries Outside the European Area

Travellers from other countries – apart from those listed above – outside the European Area are subject to the regime of compelling reasons (the indicative list of compelling reasons appears on travel certificates) (see the travel certificates in the link of the footnote).

In authorised cases, all travellers are required to complete and hold a certificate indicating the reason for their trip.

Compelling reasons are indicated on the certificate as follows:

1. French citizen, and his or her spouse (married, civil union, or cohabiting partner) and their children;
2. Citizen of the European Union or equivalent, and his or her spouse (married, civil union, or cohabiting partner) and their children, whose main residence is in France or who is returning, in transit through France, to his or her main residence in a European Union country or equivalent or to a country whose nationality they hold;
3. Citizen of a third country who is a holder of a valid French or European residence permit or long-stay visa, who has his or her main residence in France or who is returning, in transit through France, to his or her main residence in a European Union country or equivalent (valid only if the travel abroad took place prior to 31 January 2021 or was justified by a compelling reason);
4. British citizen and members of his or her family who are beneficiaries of the Agreement on Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (valid only if the travel abroad took place prior to 31 January 2021 or was justified by a compelling reason);
5. Citizen of a third country holding a long-stay visa issued for the purpose of family reunion or reunification of refugee families, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and stateless persons;
6. Health or research professional contributing to the fight against COVID-19 or recruited as an associate trainee;
7. A third-country citizen with a “Talent Passport” LSV;
8. Student moving to France for the second semester of the academic year as part of a higher education institution programme, and researcher moving to France at the invitation of a research laboratory, for research activities imperatively requiring their physical presence;
9. Land, sea, and air transport sector workers or transport service providers, including drivers of vehicles carrying goods intended for use in the territory, as well as those who are only in transit, or travelling as passengers returning to their home base or for training purposes;
10. Foreign citizen working for a diplomatic or consular mission, or an international organisation with its headquarters or an office in France, as well as his or her spouse and their children or a foreign citizen of a third country staying in France for a compelling professional reason under a mission order issued by his or her country of origin;
11. Traveller in transit in the international zone for less than 24 hours.

Furthermore, for all types of travel, travellers must show a negative "COVID RT-PCR" test carried out less than 72 hours before the departure.

- Any traveller aged 11 years old must also complete a declaration of honour certifying that:
 - he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
 - he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip;
 - he or she accepts that a test or a biological virological screening for detection of SARS-CoV-2 may be carried out on his or her arrival on French national territory;
 - he or she agrees upon his or her honour to remain in isolation for seven days upon arrival and do a new PCR-Test after seven days.
- Where a virology screening (RT-PCR) test cannot be conducted in the country of departure, the traveller may request a specific document known as "PCR Test Waiver" from the French embassy or consulate, subject to giving a compelling reason for travel (reserved for a restricted number of cases) and prior acceptance of:
 - a virological screening test for SARS-CoV-2 (antigen test) upon arrival;
 - seven-day isolation in one of the facilities designated by the French authorities, with presentation of proof of booking;
 - an RT-PCR virological screening test at the end of the isolation period – in countries where antigen tests are available, the "PCR Test Waiver" shall only be valid if supported by the result of such a test carried out less than 72 hours before boarding and showing no COVID-19 contamination.
- Any traveller under the age of 11 must have a declaration of honour certifying:
 - he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
 - he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip;
 - he or she agrees upon his or her honour to remain in isolation for seven days upon arrival.

KPMG NOTE

A specific note regarding travellers from France to a country outside of the EU: they must provide a certificate of travel with overriding reasons (family, health, or professional) to the authorities when they leave the country. Regarding travel to an EU country, it is not recommended for the moment.

It should be noted that a foreign citizen wishing to return to his or her country of residence or origin will be not prevented from leaving France (without any guarantee however of being able to return without a compelling reason).

FOOTNOTE:

1 For the website of the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministère de l'Intérieur*), see <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/L-actu-du-Ministere/Certificate-of-international-travel> . Travel certificates are attached to each category of travel (from/to EU countries, and from/to third countries).

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Contact us

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