

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

2021-205 | July 27, 2021



Canada - Borders Re-open to Fully-Vaccinated Travellers

On July 19, 2021, the government of Canada announced that it will re-open its borders for non-essential travel to fully-vaccinated travellers.¹ Effective August 9, 2021, fully-vaccinated U.S. citizens and green card holders currently residing in the U.S. will be permitted to enter Canada for discretionary (non-essential) travel. In the next phase, starting September 7, 2021, Canada will allow discretionary travel for fully-vaccinated travellers from all other countries.

For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2021-182](#) (June 24, 2021).

WHY THIS MATTERS

The Canadian borders have been closed since March 2020 for all non-discretionary travel. Provided that the COVID-19 situation in Canada remains on its current positive trajectory, the border will soon be reopened for discretionary travel for fully-vaccinated individuals. This means that travellers will be permitted to enter Canada for purposes such as visiting family, tourism and recreation. These changes will allow for increased mobility into/out of Canada and will help to facilitate the entry of fully-vaccinated foreign nationals for both work and personal purposes.

August 9, 2021 – U.S. - Canadian Border Restrictions Eased and Other Changes

Changes for U.S. Citizens and Green Card Holders

On August 9, 2021, discretionary or non-essential travel for fully-vaccinated (see definition below) American citizens and green card holders who currently reside in the United States will be permitted pending the submission of relevant documentation via ArriveCAN (website or app).²

The U.S. government has not yet announced a reciprocal arrangement for Canadian citizens.

Testing Requirements

Canadian citizens and permanent residents travelling to the U.S. for less than 72 hours will be permitted to complete their pre-entry COVID-19 test in Canada.

Individuals who have recovered from COVID-19, but continue to test positive, will be permitted to present a positive COVID-19 molecular test taken 14 to 180 days prior to their arrival in Canada.

Fully-vaccinated travellers will no longer be required to undergo an on-arrival COVID-19 test. Rather, some travellers will be randomly selected for on-arrival testing.

No More Mandatory Hotel Quarantine

Starting August 9, 2021, the three-night government authorized hotel stay will no longer be required for fully-vaccinated air travellers. Despite the easing of restrictions beginning, all travellers must still have a suitable quarantine plan in place in case they do not satisfy the requirements to be exempt from quarantine. Once in Canada, travellers must adhere to all local public health guidelines such as keeping a list of close contacts and locations visited as well as wearing a mask while in public and monitoring the development of any symptoms.

Marine Travellers

Fully vaccinated travellers arriving by water will be eligible for an eased quarantine as well. This includes flexibility given to the submission of the ArriveCAN documentation to be done upon entry to Canada due to the lack of Wi-Fi signals while at sea.

Flights into Canada Expanded to Five Additional Canadian Airports

Effective August 9, 2021, international flights carrying passengers will be permitted to land at the following five additional Canadian airports: Halifax, Québec City, Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Edmonton.³

September 7, 2021 – Global Travel to Canada Resumes

Changes for Travellers from Around the World

Effective September 7, 2021, Canada anticipates the reopening of its borders to fully-vaccinated travellers from around the world, subject to any country specific bans that are in place at the time.

Currently there is a ban on direct flights from India in order to curb the spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant. This ban has been further extended to August 21, 2021. However, it is possible for travellers from these countries to still enter Canada through indirect routes, subject to additional requirements.

Quarantine Requirements Remain in Place for Unvaccinated Travellers

Unvaccinated travellers will continue to have to complete pre-arrival, on-arrival, and day-8 COVID-19 molecular tests unless otherwise exempted. If a traveller is unable to receive a vaccination due to a medical condition, he or she may be eligible for eased quarantine and testing requirements, including a modified quarantine plan.

Unvaccinated Children

Unvaccinated children under the age of 12, or unvaccinated dependent children (due to a mental or physical condition), accompanying a fully-vaccinated parent will no longer have to quarantine for 14 days. However, these children are expected to avoid large group activities such as camps and day-care facilities during the first two weeks of their arrival in Canada. They will continue to have to complete a COVID-19 test upon arrival and on day eight of their stay.

Proof of Vaccination and Meaning of “Fully Vaccinated”

In order to be classified as a fully-vaccinated individual, travellers must be fully vaccinated with the full series of a vaccine approved by the government of Canada. The approved vaccines are: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD, and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) at least 14 days prior to their entry into Canada. These vaccines may be received in any country so long as evidence is provided in English or French or in another language accompanied by a certified translation.

All travellers must still present a suitable quarantine plan and be prepared to quarantine should an officer determine that they do not meet the conditions required for the quarantine exemption.

Airlines will be verifying that travellers coming to Canada have provided relevant data via the ArriveCAN app or website prior to boarding their flight. Travellers that are unable to provide proof of submission (i.e., ArriveCAN receipt) will not be allowed to board the flight to Canada. In addition to uploading a vaccine certificate into ArriveCAN, travellers may also carry a copy of their vaccine certificate to help ensure seamless entry into Canada.

KPMG NOTE

Key Considerations for Employers and Travellers

- U.S. citizens and green card holders currently residing in the United states must have completed their full vaccination 14 days prior to entry into Canada in order to be exempted from the quarantine exemption.
- Employees should make sure they have received a Canadian-approved vaccine and the vaccine certification is available in English or French or with a certified translation.
- Travellers should submit a quarantine plan via ArriveCan in case they are required to quarantine as the final decision rests with the border services officer at the port of entry.
- With the opening of the Canadian borders, travellers should anticipate longer wait times at the airport and land borders and plan accordingly.
- With the opening of the border to non-essential travel, family members of foreign workers should no longer be required to obtain a travel exemption letter to enter Canada.
- Travellers entering Canada will continue to be subject to any specific provincial and territorial public health measures.

The government of Canada still strongly advises against non-essential travel outside Canada as there may be sudden changes to the entry requirements.

Employees and travellers who have concerns or questions regarding their upcoming travels and next steps are encouraged to contact their usual qualified immigration counsel and/or travel agent. They are also welcome to contact KPMG Law LLP for further guidance.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 See: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2021/07/government-of-canada-announces-easing-of-border-measures-for-fully-vaccinated-travellers.html> .
- 2 See: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2021/07/easing-border-measures-for-fully-vaccinated-travellers-entering-canada--permitting-discretionary-travel-for-citizens-and-permanent-residents-of-th.html> .
- 3 See: <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/india#flights> .

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Contact us

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