

# GMS Flash Alert



## Immigration Edition

2021-278 | November 12, 2021

# Japan - Borders Re-opened Partially, Easing of Quarantine Measures

The government of Japan has announced an easing of the travel restrictions for short-term business visitors (less than 90 days) and long-term stays with respect to work, families, students, and technical trainees.<sup>1</sup>

Effective 8 November (10:00 am, JST), Japan introduced new border measures to partially lift the entry-ban concerning foreign national new arrivals.

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## WHY THIS MATTERS

There are approximately 370,000 foreign nationals who obtained the Certificate of Eligibility (CoE) but cannot enter Japan due to the suspension of visa applications caused by the entry ban.<sup>2</sup> Total entries from overseas, including Japanese nationals, are currently capped at 3,500, but the government is considering slowly increasing the daily quota of entrants.<sup>3</sup> The new measures also shorten the COVID-19 quarantine period to three days for vaccinated arrivals who fulfill the requirements.

The measures still do not allow foreign nationals to immediately enter Japan nor shorten the quarantine period; in addition, some paperwork and processing needs to be completed by the host entity in advance. International tourists are still subject to an entry ban for the time being.

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## Background

Japan had temporarily opened its borders during October to December 2020 to nonresident foreign nationals, but they have been closed to all new foreign arrivals since January 2021 – until now – unless the case was approved as ‘special

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exceptional circumstances,' such as a spouse or child of a Japanese national or the case requires humanitarian consideration.

## New Measures for Border Enforcement

Under the new measures:

- (1) ease entry restrictions on new foreign national arrivals, and
- (2) require vaccinated travellers be subject to a shortened quarantine period currently at between 14 and 10 days, that is set at three days (plus seven days of observation of the individual's conduct according to the daily activity plan provided by the host entity in advance).

In order to help secure the foreign national employee's entry into Japan, the host entity should take steps to make sure the employee passes a screening by the "appropriate" ministry in advance and the host entity should be responsible for supervision of the employee's conduct after his/her entry. "Appropriate" means the ministry related to the business/sector of the host entity which are listed by the government. The host entity must apply for an approval certificate at the competent division within the competent ministry at the designated email address.<sup>4</sup> The list of ministries per sectors can be found at: <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/000852173.pdf> .

If the person wants to only enter Japan but is willing to fully complete the quarantine period without shortening it up to three days, he/she still needs to obtain an approval certificate although the host entity does not need to fully complete the form for the "daily activity plan" (which is one of the required documents for applying for the certificate to the ministry).

It is important to note that the above approval certificate is required also for Japanese nationals and foreign national residents who re-enter Japan and wish to shorten the quarantine period to three days.<sup>5</sup>

It is also important to note that the processing time for the approval certificate may take approximately one month from the date of submission to the appropriate ministry via email.

Travellers must fully meet the following requirements:

- Japanese national, foreign national resident with a valid Residence Card and Re-entry Permit, short-term business traveller, and/or an individual with long-term stay, who are approved for entry.
- No travel history within 14 days in the listed countries/regions that are required to stay for 10 days or 6 days upon arrival at the hotel designated by the Japanese government.
- Fully vaccinated with a valid vaccination certificate (Pfizer, Moderna, or AstraZeneca only).

The host entity must take full responsibility of foreign nationals arriving in Japan; for example, they must explain the procedures and obligations to such individuals, and they must obtain a consent in accordance with the terms agreed under the Written Pledge.

## Process Flow

1. The host entity first needs to arrange for the hotel/accommodation where the foreign national can stay during the quarantine, and to prepare the necessary arrangements including booking the means of transportation, PCR-test, etc.

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2. Paperwork for approval certificate:
  - Application form
  - Written Pledge
  - Daily activities plan for 14-days upon arrival
  - List of entrants
  - Passport copy
  - Vaccination Certificate.
3. Apply for an approval certificate to the appropriate ministry.
4. The ministry issues an approval certificate.
5. The foreign national with a valid CoE can finally apply for a visa at the Japanese embassy/consulate.
6. The Japanese embassy issues a visa.
7. The foreign national must complete the pre-departure procedure (see our newsletter issued in October 2021 for required pre-/post-travel requirements, [GMS Flash Alert 2021-250](#), 4 October 2021).
8. The foreign national can enter Japan.
9. The foreign national must follow the quarantine rules according to the departure country and the possession of a vaccination certificate (see our newsletter for applicable quarantine rules, [GMS Flash Alert 2021-250](#), 4 October 2021).

## Guidelines for Activities during the Exempt Period of Quarantine

If the person entering Japan is approved by the ministry and has a valid vaccination certificate, and if he/she shows a negative of PCR-test on or after the third day after arrival, the total 14-days quarantine period will be shortened by up to three days.

However, this does not mean that the person entering Japan will be able to move about freely. He/she must strictly follow the daily activities schedule as per the host entity and must report to the authority for the daily health check until the 10<sup>th</sup> day from his or her arrival. That person then needs to take another PCR test on the 10<sup>th</sup> day. If the test result is negative, he/she can terminate the quarantine period.

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### KPMG NOTE

The purpose of the strict measures is to prevent the virus from entering and spreading in Japan from abroad. It is very important the foreign national diligently follow the guidelines of pre-/post-entry and basic infection prevention measures/etiquette including 1) wearing a mask, 2) keeping physical distance, 3) hand cleaning/washing, 4) frequent ventilation, and 5) not forcing oneself to go out if one shows any symptoms of cold or flu.

The government of Japan still suggests using a private car but has extended the use of public transportation only if it's reserved seat (trains, buses, etc.) after the third day if the PCR-test result was negative.<sup>6</sup>

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## FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: [https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/ca/cp/page22\\_003380.html#section2](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/ca/cp/page22_003380.html#section2) .
- 2 E. Lang, T. Tsuji, and S. Tamura, Nikkei staff writers, "Over 370,000 foreigners waiting to enter Japan due to COVID curbs." *Nikkei-Asia* (online) (21 October 2021) at: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Japan-immigration/Over-370-000-foreigners-waiting-to-enter-Japan-due-to-COVID-curbs> . Please note that by clicking on this link, you are leaving the KPMG website for an external site (non-governmental, non-KPMG), that KPMG is not affiliated with nor is KPMG endorsing its content. The use of the external site and its content may be subject to the terms of use and/or privacy policies of its owner or operator.
- 3 R. Swift, "Japan eases COVID-19 border curbs, trails major partners." *Reuters* (online) (2 November 2021) at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-eases-covid-19-border-curbs-trails-major-partners-2021-11-02/> . Please note that by clicking on this link, you are leaving the KPMG website for an external site (non-governmental, non-KPMG), that KPMG is not affiliated with nor is KPMG endorsing its content. The use of the external site and its content may be subject to the terms of use and/or privacy policies of its owner or operator.
- 4 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (in Japanese): [https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/0000121431\\_00318.html](https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/0000121431_00318.html) .
- 5 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (in Japanese): <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/000851857.pdf> .
- 6 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (in Japanese): <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/000851832.pdf> .

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**The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Japan.**

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