



# GMS Flash Alert

## Immigration Edition

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# France – COVID-19: Modifications to Travel Restrictions, Including U.K.

This *GMS Flash Alert* provides an update on tightening of health control measures at borders with the United Kingdom due to the fast-evolving coronavirus situation from 16 December 2021.<sup>1</sup>

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## WHY THIS MATTERS

To deal with the virus and contain the spread of its variants, stricter border control measures have been temporarily in effect since 24 April 2021. (For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2021-125](#), 28 April 2021.)

Since 1 December, in light of the approaching Christmas holidays and in spite of the spread of the “omicron” variant of SARS-CoV-2 (“coronavirus”), the flow of travellers between France and foreign countries has remained open, but certain new (and existing) conditions apply depending on the country of departure. (For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2021-303](#), 7 December 2021.)

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

These rules are updated regularly by the French government. Travellers and global-mobility personnel must keep informed accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

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 response to the extremely swift spread of the omicron variant in the U.K., the French government has decided to reintroduce compelling reasons for inbound and outbound travel with the U.K., as well as tighten the testing requirement on departure and arrival.

From Saturday, 18 December at 12:00am (local time), the following rules shall apply for all travel between the U.K. and France.

## Travel from the United Kingdom to France

All travellers from United Kingdom are subject to the regime of “compelling reasons” (the indicative list of compelling reasons appears on travel certificates).

These reasons will not authorise travel for tourism or business reasons.

Stricter compelling reasons are indicated on the certificate as follows:

1. French citizens, their spouses (married, civil union, and cohabiting), and their children.
2. Citizens of the EU or equivalent, and their spouses (married, civil union, or cohabiting partner), and their children, whose main residence is in France or who are returning, in transit through France, to their main residence in an EU country or equivalent.
3. Citizens of other countries with a valid French or European residence permit or long-stay visa whose main residence is in France.
4. British citizens and their family members who are beneficiaries of the agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community. British civil servants exercising their duties, border police officers, and customs officers. Channel Tunnel staff (engaged *inter alia* in operations, maintenance, security), or cross-Channel facilities staff.
5. Citizens of other countries holding a long-stay visa issued for purposes of ordinary family reunion or refugee family reunification, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and stateless persons.
6. Foreign health or research professionals involved in the fight against COVID-19 as well as their spouses (married, civil partner, cohabiting partner subject to proof of community of life), and children.
7. Foreign health or research professionals engaged as associate trainees.
8. Citizens of other countries with a “talent passport” long-stay visa, as well as their spouses (married, civil union, or cohabiting partner on presentation of proof of “community of life”), and children.
9. Students enrolled in “French as a foreign language” (FFL) courses prior to enrolment in higher education or admitted to the oral examinations of French higher education institutions or enrolled to begin the new 2021-2022 academic year. Researchers or teachers (including language assistants) settling in France at the invitation of a research laboratory, for research activities requiring a physical presence, as well as their spouses (married, civil union, cohabiting partner on presentation of proof of community of life), and their children.
10. Workers in the land, sea, and air transport sectors or transport service providers (including drivers of any vehicle transporting goods for use in the territory as well as those only in transit or travelling as passengers to resettle in their home base).

11. Foreign citizens working for a diplomatic or consular mission, or an international organisation with its headquarters or an office in France, as well as their spouses and their children.

12. Travellers in transit for less than 24 hours in an international zone.

Furthermore, travellers must show a negative coronavirus PCR test, or an antigen test carried out less than 24 hours prior to the departure.

Prior to their trip, all travellers from the United Kingdom are requested to facilitate the administrative formalities by completing the form available at the following web address: <https://passager.serveureos.org> .

They must enter the address where they will be staying in France. This platform will be used to generate prefectural decrees requiring all travellers, whether unvaccinated or vaccinated, to be isolated in the place of their choice.

This isolation obligation can be waived after 48 hours, subject to presentation of a negative coronavirus PCR or an antigen test.

Checks will be organised to ensure effective enforcement of these measures.

## Travel from France to the United Kingdom

The government equally urges all travellers who had planned to go to the U.K. to postpone their trip.

All travellers from France to the United Kingdom are subject to the regime of “compelling reasons” (the indicative list of compelling reasons appears on travel certificates).

### **These reasons will not authorise travel for tourism or business reasons.**

Compelling reasons are indicated on the certificate as follows:

1. Foreign nationals joining their home country.
2. Death of a family member in direct line (grandparents, parents, children, and siblings). Visit to a person whose prognosis is vital, for family members in direct line (grandparents, parents, children, and siblings). Documents required: death certificate or certificate of death, medical certificate establishing the situation of the person who has the life prognosis, proof of family relationship.
3. Travel in the context of the exercise of a right of custody recognised by a court decision. Documents required: court decision and proof of residence.
4. Summons from a judicial or administrative authority. Document required: summons by the administrative or judicial authority.
5. Legal or economic impossibility to stay in the territory where the person is located / execution of a deportation order. Documents required: expired residence permit, notice of dismissal, etc.
6. Participation in a university exchange programme. Required document: certificate of attendance issued by the institution.
7. Vital medical emergency (for the person and an accompanying person if their presence is essential). Required documents: medical certificate, proof of scheduled hospitalisation, etc.

8. Health or research professional involved in the fight against COVID-19 or participating in cooperative operations of major interest in the field of health. Required documents: professional card.

9. Ad hoc missions linked to the exercise of public authority (including diplomatic missions and missions essential to the continuation of operational contracts of the armed forces or military corps) which cannot be deferred or postponed. British officials in the performance of their duties, persons working for the border police, customs border police, customs officers. Channel Tunnel staff (including those working on operations, maintenance, security) or cross-Channel facilities. Document required: professional card, mission order.

10. Worker in the land, sea, or air transport sector or transport service provider (including drivers of any vehicle for the transport of goods vehicles transporting goods for use in the territory, as well as those who are only in transit as well as those who are only in transit, or travelling as a passenger to its base of departure).

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## FOOTNOTES:

1 For additional information, see "Foreign travel advice - France" webpage on gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france/entry-requirements> .

Also see (in French) the webpage "[COVID19] Conditions de déplacement entre la France et le Royaume-Uni" of the Embassy of France in the United Kingdom at: <https://uk.ambafrance.org/Conditions-de-deplacement> .

2 For information on travel to/from the U.K. and the status for travel to/from other countries see the website of the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministère de l'Intérieur*) at: <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/L-actu-du-Ministere/Certificate-of-international-travel> .

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## Contact us

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\* Please note the KPMG International member firm in the United States does not provide immigration or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.

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

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