

# GMS Flash Alert

## Immigration Edition

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# Canada - Suspension of COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate & Randomized Testing

The government of Canada has announced that effective June 20, Canadian and international travelers will no longer need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to board a plane or train in Canada for domestic and international travel.<sup>1</sup> (For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2022-060](#), March 17, 2022.)

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Since October 30, 2021, all travelers (ages 12 and up) departing from Canadian airports, trains and cruise ships were required to be fully vaccinated in order to travel.

The Canadian government noted that the mandatory vaccination requirement helped mitigate the full impact of COVID-19. The latest announcement to suspend this requirement is part of Canada's effort to ease border restrictions and is expected to help reduce wait times at airports.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Suspended

Effective June 20, unvaccinated Canadian citizens and permanent residents can board planes and trains both domestically and internationally. Foreign nationals entering Canada must continue to be fully vaccinated (subject to limited exceptions). However, unvaccinated foreign nationals may now depart the country.

All travelers must continue to follow the current testing and quarantine requirements upon re-entry to Canada, including using the ArriveCAN mobile app or desktop version to submit their travel and COVID-19 related information within 72 hours of their arrival in Canada.

## Random COVID-19 Testing Suspended

The Canadian government also announced that between June 11 and June 30, randomized testing at Canadian airports is suspended. This does not apply to unvaccinated travelers.<sup>2</sup> Canada is expected to bring back randomized testing on July 1; however, all testing, including for unvaccinated travellers, will be performed off-site.

Eliminating randomized testing at airports is expected to significantly reduce wait times at airports.

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### KPMG NOTE

#### Key Considerations for Employers and Employees

- Employers should advise unvaccinated employees that they can now board a flight or train in Canada.
- Employees should be provided with up-to-date entry instructions to help ensure they continue to meet COVID-19 requirements before arriving in Canada.

The information provided above is general in nature as there are limited details currently available on the new requirements, KPMG Law LLP will continue to work with government officials to gather more details and share them once available. Employers and employees who have questions about the vaccine and testing requirements are encouraged to contact their qualified immigration counsel, employment counsel or KPMG Law LLP for further guidance.

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### FOOTNOTES:

1 News release, June 14, 2022 – Ottawa, Ontario – Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and Transport Canada, "[Suspension of the vaccine mandates for domestic travellers, transportation workers and federal employees.](#)"

2 J.P. Tasker and C. Hall, "Feds temporarily suspend random arrival testing at Canada's airports" on CBC (online), June 10, 2022 at: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/feds-travel-random-arrival-testing-1.6484759#:~:text=Politics-Feds%20temporarily%20suspend%20random%20arrival%20testing%20at%20Canada's%20airports.up%20on%20some%20testing%20requirements.> Please note that by clicking on this URL, you are leaving the KPMG website for an external site, that KPMG is not affiliated or nor is it endorsed by KPMG. 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.

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## Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional\* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in Canada:



### **Graeme Black**

**Partner,**  
**Canadian Immigration**  
KPMG Law LLP  
Tel. +1-416-943-7756  
[graemeblack@kpmg.ca](mailto:graemeblack@kpmg.ca)

### **Amira Zubairi**

**Associate Canadian Immigration**  
KPMG Law LLP  
Tel. +1-416-943-7889  
[amirazubairi@kpmg.ca](mailto:amirazubairi@kpmg.ca)

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