



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Japan - Entry Requirements Eased from 7 September

Effective 7 September 2022 (00:00 am, JST), Japan is easing travel/entry requirements in light of further positive progress in COVID-19 vaccinations and infection trends. For example, the need to have a certificate showing a negative COVID-19 test result taken within 72-hours prior to departure is no longer required as long as the condition is met that the traveller has received a valid three doses of vaccine and holds a valid “three-dose vaccination certificate” (also called the “sufficient vaccination certificate”).¹ Also, under the new measures, the daily entry cap will be raised to 50,000 from the current 20,000.²

WHY THIS MATTERS

According to current border control measures that require a negative COVID-19 test result before an individual's departure, there are many Japanese and/or foreign residents who are unable to return to Japan because they became COVID-19 positive as determined by a PCR test in the destination country, and they are obligated to extend their stay until the test result comes back negative for COVID-19. In addition to dispensing with the requirements for pre-departure COVID-19 tests for travellers who have received at least three vaccine doses (and can prove such with a valid certificate), Japan will also start allowing visitors on “package tours” without accompanying tour guides from all countries/regions.³

In June, Japan began allowing foreign tourists into the country for the first time in two years, but only if on tightly-controlled guided tours from the countries/regions categorised as “blue” (low risk for COVID-19).

New Border Measures from 7 September 2022

Effective 7 September (00:00 am, JST), all cross-border travellers and “returnees” who possess a valid vaccination certificate to prove a booster (at least three doses of vaccine) are no longer required to submit the certificate of a

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negative COVID-19 test taken within 72-hours before the departure. The new measures will apply to all travellers who board aircraft with an estimated time of arrival after 00:00 JST on 7 September 2022. All travellers and returnees including Japanese nationals who do not possess valid vaccination certificates are required to obtain a certificate of a negative test result for COVID-19 within 72 hours before departure from the destination country, otherwise the entry will be denied.⁴

Category of destination countries and regions	Entry with/without Valid vaccination certificate	Quarantine		
		Pre-departure test	On arrival test	Isolation upon arrival
Blue	With	Not required	Not required	Not required
	Without	Required		
Required	With	Not required	Required	3 (or 5 days) at home ※①
	Without	Required		
Red	With	Not required	Required	3 days at facility ※②
	Without	Required		

Source: KPMG in Japan

※①: An individual's isolation period will be terminated if a COVID-19 test result is negative on the third day of isolation. Such individual is required to complete a total of five days' isolation if he or she does not take the test on the third day.

※②: An individual's isolation will be terminated if a COVID-19 test result is negative on the third day of isolation at the facility designated by the government.

Sufficient Vaccination Certificate

An official certificate must be issued by the government or a relevant public institution and fully indicate the following items in Japanese or English:

- Name;
- Date of birth;
- Vaccine name/manufacture;
- Date of vaccination;

- Number of doses.

If the date of birth is not contained in the certificate, it may still be valid if it contains the traveller's passport number or other specific information that may identify the individual.

Japanese or English translation is required if the vaccination certificate is issued in a language other than Japanese or English.

The certificate must clearly indicate the name of vaccines that the Japanese government approves as below.⁵ The certificate with the vaccines not listed below is invalid.

- COMIRNATY intramuscular injection / Pfizer;
- Spikevax Intramuscular Injection / Moderna;
- Nuvaxovid Intramuscular Injection / Novavax;
- Vaxzevria Intramuscular Injection / AstraZeneca;
- JCOVDEN intramuscular injection / Janssen;
- COVAXIN / Bharat Biotech (effective from 31 July 2022).

Who Can Enter Japan?

Japan is only opening its borders to Japanese nationals, foreign residents holding valid Residence Cards, foreign new arrivals under a long-term stay holding a valid CoE (Certificate of Eligibility), and/or those travellers considered as "special exceptional circumstances."⁶ Short-term business travellers and tourists on package tours arranged by travel agencies are also permitted to visit Japan. Entry to Japan is still prohibited to those on independent travel.

ERFS and Visa Required for All Foreign National New Arrivals

Since the visa exemption programme has been suspended for the time being, all foreign nationals who wish to newly enter Japan need to apply for a visa (except for those foreign residents of Japan with re-entry permits). ALL foreign travellers must obtain the visa in advance at the competent Japanese embassy/consulate. **[Update: From 7 September, those nationals of Temporary Visa Visitor exemption countries can apply for a multiple-entry short-term visa for the purpose of business affairs and for the spouse or child of the Japanese national.]**

In addition to the visa, effective 1 March (00:00 am, JST), the government introduced a new mandatory procedure to be undertaken prior to the visa application. The Japanese host entities/organisations must complete prescribed online applications in "Entrants, Returnees Follow-up System (ERFS)" for "Certificate for Completion of Registration to the ERFS System" prior to the visa application being made. Under the new entry measure, the Japanese embassy/consulate does not accept a visa application without a copy of the "Certificate for Completion of Registration to the ERFS system" issued by the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare. This is a certificate that proves the registration of the entrant's information including the location for accommodation upon arrival (see [GMS Flash Alert 2022-041](#), 1 March 2022). Entrants and returnees including Japanese nationals may complete the Fast Track system before travelling to Japan via the MySoS website or the MySoS app on a smartphone for smoother quarantine at the arrival airport: <https://www.hco.mhlw.go.jp/fasttrack/en/>.

Online Visa Applications for Nationals of Canada and USA

From 18 August, Canadian and U.S. nationals who are physically residing in Canada and the U.S. are able to apply for a short-term visa (Temporary Visitor Visa) via online.⁷

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: https://www.mofa.go.jp/ca/fna/page4e_001053.html .
- 2 See "Entry cap to rise to 50,000 on Sept. 7; Omicron shots moved up" in *The Asahi Shinbun* (online) (31 August 2022) at: <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14707566> . *Please note, that by clicking on the afore-noted link, you are leaving the KPMG website for an external site, 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 Japan Tourism Agency – Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism: https://www.mlit.go.jp/kankocho/page03_000076.html .
- 4 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/covid-19/border_vaccine.html .
- 5 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/covid-19/border_vaccine.html .
- 6 Ministry of Justice: https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/visaonline.html .
- 7 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/visaonline.html .

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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 Japan:



Hisanobu Eguchi

Tel. +81 03 6229 8116

Hisanobu.eguchi@jp.kpmg.com



Paul Cherrone

Tel. +81 03 6229 6249

Paul.Cherrone@jp.kpmg.com



Mayu Kato

Tel. +81 03 6229 6469

Mayu.Kato@jp.kpmg.com

** 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 Japan.

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