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# Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Recovery from COVID-19 for All Air Passengers Arriving in the United States

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If you plan to travel internationally, get tested before you travel by air into the United States (US), or be prepared to show proof of a recent positive viral test and a letter from your healthcare provider or a public health official stating that you were cleared to travel.

On January 12, 2021, CDC issued an [Order](#) requiring all air passengers arriving to the US from a foreign country to get tested no more than 3 days before their flight departs and to present the negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding the flight. This Order will go into effect at 12:01am EST (5:01am GMT) on January 26, 2021.

When it goes into effect, this Order will replace a previous order currently in effect and signed by the CDC Director on December 25, 2020, requiring a [negative pre-departure COVID-19 test result for all airline passengers arriving into the United States from the United Kingdom](#) .

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Does this requirement apply to US citizens?

This Order applies to all air passengers, 2 years of age or older, traveling into the US, including US citizens and legal permanent residents.

### Are foreign nationals no longer subject to Presidential Proclamation travel restrictions if they can show a negative test or documentation of recovery?

The CDC order does not replace the Presidential proclamations. Therefore, a negative test result for COVID-19 or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding the flight does not exempt a foreign national from the travel restrictions outlined in the Presidential proclamations.

With specific exceptions, several Presidential proclamations suspend and limit entry into the United States, as immigrants or nonimmigrants, all aliens who were physically present within specific countries during the 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States.

For a full list of countries and links to the proclamations on the White House website, visit [Travelers Prohibited from Entry to the United States](#).

## Are territories or possessions of the US considered foreign countries for the purposes of this Order?

No, the Order to present a documentation of a negative COVID-19 test or recovery from COVID-19 does not apply to air passengers flying from a US territory or possession to a US state.

US territories and possessions of the US include American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.

## When do I need to get a test to travel to the US? And what kind of test do I need?

Get tested no more than 3 days before your flight to the US departs. Make sure to be tested with a [viral test](#) (NAAT or antigen test) to determine if you are currently infected with COVID-19. Also make sure that you receive your results before your flight departs and have documentation of your results to show the airline.

## What if I recently recovered from COVID-19?

CDC does not recommend getting tested again in the three months after a positive viral test, as long as you do not have [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If you have had a positive viral test in the past 3 months, and you have [met the criteria to end isolation](#), you may travel instead with documentation of your positive viral test results and a letter from your healthcare provider or a public health official that states you have been cleared for travel. The positive test result and letter together are referred to as "documentation of recovery."

## Who is checking to make sure that people have a negative test or documentation of recovery before they board a plane to the US?

The airline will confirm a COVID-19 negative test result or documentation of recovery for all passengers before boarding.

## What happens if I don't take a test and want to travel to the US?

Air passengers traveling to the US are required to present a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery. Airlines must confirm the negative test result or documentation of recovery for all passengers before boarding. If a passenger chooses not to present a test result or documentation of recovery, the airline must deny boarding to the passenger.

## What happens if I test positive?

People should [self-isolate](#) and [delay](#) their travel if symptoms develop or a pre-departure test result is positive until they have [recovered from COVID-19](#). Airlines must refuse to board anyone who does not present a negative test result for COVID-19 or documentation of recovery.

## What is a verifiable test result?

A verifiable test result must be in the form of written documentation (paper or electronic copy) of a laboratory test result. Testing must be performed using a viral test (NAAT or antigen), and negative results must be presented to the airline prior to boarding. The test result documentation must include information that identifies the person, a specimen collection date and the type of test. A negative test result must show test was done within the 3 days before the flight. A positive test result must show the test was done within the 3 months before the flight.

## What kind of documentation of my test result do I need to present?

CDC requires that air passengers arriving in the US have a paper or electronic copy of their test result for review by the airline before you board and for potential review by public health officials after you arrive in the US.

## If I tested negative before my flight, do I need to get another test when I get to the US?

CDC recommends that travelers get tested 3-5 days after travel **AND** stay home or otherwise self-quarantine for 7 days after travel. Even if you test negative, stay home for the full 7 days. If you don't get tested, it's safest to stay home for 10 days. Always follow [state and local](#) recommendations or requirements related to travel.

All travelers (including those who have recovered from COVID-19) should remember to [wear a mask](#), [stay at least 6 feet apart](#) from people who are not in your household, and [wash their hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing and before eating. Travelers should look for [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, and take your temperature if you feel sick. Anyone sick with symptoms of COVID-19 should [self-isolate](#) and [delay](#) further travel.

For more information, visit [After You Travel Internationally](#)

## Do I need to get a test before leaving the US?

CDC recommends that you get tested with a [viral test](#) (NAAT or antigen) 1-3 days before you travel internationally. Travelers should additionally follow any requirements at their destination.

## When does this order take effect?

This Order will go into effect on January 26, 2021.

## Does this order apply to all flights? Or just commercial flights?

This order applies to all flights, including private flights and general aviation aircraft (charter flights). Passengers traveling by air into the US are required to have proof of testing regardless of flight type.

## Does the testing requirement apply to aircraft crew members?

Crew members on official duty, whether working or in an assigned deadhead status (transportation of a flight crew member as a passenger or non-operating flight crew member), are exempt from the testing requirement as long as they follow industry standard protocols for the prevention of COVID-19 as set forth in relevant Safety Alerts for Operators (SAFOs) issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

## If I have one or more connecting flights to the US, does the 3-day period apply to the first flight or the last one?

If you are arriving on a direct flight to the US, your test must be done within the 3 days before your flight to the US departs. If you are arriving to the US via one or more connecting flights, your test must be done in the 3 days before the first flight in your itinerary, but only if the connecting flights were booked as a single passenger record with a final destination in the US and each connection (layover) is no longer than 24 hours long. If your connecting flight to the US was booked separately or a connection in your itinerary lasts longer than 24 hours, you will need to get tested within the 3 days before your flight that arrives in the US.

## What happens if my flight is delayed and it goes over the 3-day limit for testing?

If your flight is delayed before departure, you will need to get re-tested if the delay causes your test to fall outside of the 3-day pre-departure testing period requirement.

## If I am connecting through the US to another country, do I still need to get tested?

Yes. Any flight entering the US, even for a connection, will require testing before departure.

## What should airlines and operators of private flights or general aviation aircraft do with passenger attestations?

Operators of private flights and general aviation aircraft must maintain passenger attestations for two years, per the Order.

## Do airlines and operators of private flights or general aviation aircraft need to keep copies of passenger test results?

No, passengers must show a copy of their test results to airline employees or the aircraft operator before boarding, but the airline or aircraft operator does not need to retain copies of test results.

## What if I have had a COVID-19 vaccine? Do I still need a negative COVID-19 test or documentation of recovery from COVID-19?

Yes, all air passengers traveling to the US, regardless of vaccination status, are required to present a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery.

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