



COVID-19

Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Documentation of Recovery from COVID-19

Required for all air passengers two years of age or older boarding a flight from a foreign country to the United States

Updated Jan. 27, 2022

What You Need to Know

- **If you plan to travel internationally**, you will need to get a COVID-19 viral test (regardless of vaccination status or citizenship) no more than 1 day before you travel by air into the United States. You must show your negative result to the airline before you board your flight.
- If you recently recovered from COVID-19, you may instead travel with documentation of recovery from COVID-19 (i.e., your positive COVID-19 viral test result on a sample taken no more than 90 days before the flight's departure from a foreign country **and** a letter from a licensed healthcare provider or a public health official stating that you were cleared to travel).

COVID-19 Testing Requirement for International Travel to the United States

CDC amended its October 25, 2021 [Order](#), titled, "*Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Recovery from COVID-19 for All Air Passengers Arriving in the United States.*" This amendment updates COVID-19 testing requirements for air passengers 2 years or older boarding a flight to the United States.

All air passengers 2 years or older with a flight departing to the US from a foreign country at or after **12:01am EST (5:01am GMT) on December 6, 2021**, are required show a negative COVID-19 viral test result taken no more than 1 day before travel, or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days, before they board their flight.

- Air passengers will also be required to confirm in the form of an attestation that the information they present is true.

For the full list of requirements and exemptions, please review the language in the [Order](#).

International travel poses additional risks and even fully vaccinated travelers are at increased risk for getting and possibly spreading new COVID-19 variants.

CDC recommends delaying international travel until you are fully vaccinated.

- [Requirement for Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination For Air Passengers](#)

- [Travel Assessment](#)
- [International Travel Information for U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals, Lawful Permanent Residents and Immigrants](#)
- [Non-U.S. citizen, Non-U.S. immigrants: Air Travel to the United States](#)

Aircraft Operators/ Airlines/ Crew

For additional information, resources, and FAQs please visit the following webpages:


- [Aircraft Operators/Airlines/Crew FAQs Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Documentation of Recovery from COVID-19](#)
- [Air Travel Toolkit for Airline Partners](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

[Does this requirement apply to US citizens?](#) 

Yes, this Order applies to all air passengers 2 years or older traveling into the US, including US citizens and lawful permanent residents (Green Card holders) unless exempted.

[What if I have had a COVID-19 vaccine or have tested positive for antibodies? Do I still need a negative COVID-19 test or documentation of recovery from COVID-19?](#) 

Yes, at this time all air passengers, 2 years or older, traveling to the US, regardless of vaccination or antibody status, are required to provide a negative COVID-19 viral test result or documentation of recovery unless exempted.

[Does this Order apply to land border crossings or persons arriving at seaports?](#) 

No, the requirements of this Order only apply to air travel into the U.S.

[Are US territories considered foreign countries for the purposes of this Order?](#) 

No, the requirement to present a negative result of a COVID-19 viral test or documentation recovery from COVID-19 does not apply to air passengers with flights from a US territory to a US state.

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

[Do the requirements of this Order apply to diplomats and special visa holders?](#) 

Diplomats and special visa holders are not exempt from this Order.

Do state and local governments in the US have separate testing requirements for air passengers?

Federal testing requirements must be met to board a plane to the US. Some state and local governments may have similar or more restrictive testing requirements for air passengers arriving in their jurisdictions. Always check and follow [state and local](#) recommendations or requirements related to travel in addition to federal requirements.

Test and Documentation Requirements

What types of SARS-CoV-2 tests are acceptable under the Order?

You must be tested with a [viral test](#) to look for current infection – these include an antigen test or a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT).

Phrases indicating a test is an antigen test could include, but not are not limited to:

- Rapid antigen test
- Viral antigen test
- Also, could be noted as Antigen Chromatographic Digital Immunoassay, Antigen Chemiluminescence Immunoassay, or Antigen Lateral Flow Fluorescence

Examples of available NAATs for SARS-CoV-2 include but are not restricted to:

- Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR)
- Isothermal amplification including:
 - Nicking endonuclease amplification reaction (NEAR)
 - Transcription mediated amplification (TMA)
 - Loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP)
 - Helicase-dependent amplification (HDA)
 - Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats (CRISPR)
 - Strand displacement amplification (SDA)

The test used must be authorized for use by the relevant national authority for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 in the country where the test is administered.

A viral test conducted for U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) personnel, including DOD contractors, dependents, and other U.S. government employees, and tested by a DOD laboratory located in a foreign country also meets the requirements of the Order.

Can I get a rapid test?

Rapid tests are acceptable if they are a viral test that meet the requirements under the Order.

Does a self-test meet the conditions of the Order?

You can use a self-test (sometimes referred to as home test) that meets the following criteria:

- The test must be a SARS-CoV-2 viral test (nucleic acid amplification test [NAAT] or antigen test) with Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) OR the relevant national authority where the test is administered

THE TEST IS ADMINISTERED.

- The testing procedure must include a telehealth service affiliated with the manufacturer of the test that provides real-time supervision remotely through an audio and video connection. Some FDA-authorized self-tests that include a telehealth service may require a prescription.
- The telehealth provider must confirm your identity, observe the sample collection and testing procedures, confirm the test result, and issue a report that meets the requirements of CDC's Order (see "What information must be included in the test result?" below).
- Airlines and other aircraft operators must be able to review and confirm your identity and the test result details. You must also be able to present the documentation of test results to U.S. officials at the port of entry and local/state health departments, if requested.

Some countries may restrict importation of tests that are not authorized or registered there. If you are considering bringing a U.S.-authorized test with you for use outside of the United States, contact authorities at your destination for information before you travel.

What information must be included on the test result?

A test result must be in the form of written documentation (paper or digital copy). The documentation must include:

1. Type of test (indicating it is a NAAT or antigen test)
2. Entity issuing the result (e.g., laboratory, healthcare entity, or telehealth service)
3. Sample collection date
 - A negative test result must show the sample was taken no more than 1 day before the flight.
 - A positive test result for documentation of recovery from COVID-19 must show the sample was taken within the 90 days before the flight.
4. Information that identifies the person (full name plus at least one other identifier such as date of birth or passport number)
5. Test result

Before boarding a flight to the U.S., you will need to show a paper or digital copy of your test result for review by the airline and may be requested to show to public health officials after you arrive in the U.S.

What if I recently recovered from COVID-19?

People who have recovered from COVID-19 can continue to test positive for up to 3 months after their infection. CDC does not recommend retesting within 3 months after a person with COVID-19 first [developed symptoms of COVID-19](#) (or the date their sample was taken for their first positive viral diagnostic test if their infection was asymptomatic).

If you have had a positive viral test on a sample taken during the past 90 days, and you have [met the criteria to travel](#), you may travel instead with your positive viral test results and a signed letter from a licensed healthcare provider or a public health official that states you have been cleared for travel according to [CDC's travel guidance](#). The positive test result and letter together are referred to as "documentation of recovery."

A letter from your healthcare provider or a public health official that clears you to travel, must have information that identifies you personally (e.g., name and date of birth) that matches the personal identifiers on your passport or other travel documents. The letter must be signed and dated on official letterhead that contains the name, address, and phone number of the healthcare provider or public health official who signed the letter.

If you have recovered from COVID-19 but are not able to obtain documentation of recovery that fulfills the requirements, you will need to show a negative COVID-19 viral test result from a sample taken no more than 1 day before your flight to the US departs.

Even if you have recovered from COVID-19, if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 you should [isolate](#), not travel, and consult with a healthcare provider for testing recommendations.

Does a negative test result, documentation of recovery, or proof of vaccination need to be in English?

Airlines and other aircraft operators must be able to confirm the test result and proof of vaccination and review other required information and should determine when translation is necessary for these purposes. If your documents are in a language other than English, you should check with your airline or aircraft operator before travel.

What is an attestation?

An attestation is a statement, writing, entry, or other representation under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 that confirms that the information provided is true. Willingly providing false or misleading information may lead to fines and other criminal penalties.

How do air passengers provide an attestation?

As required by United States federal law, all airlines or other aircraft operators will provide and collect the passenger attestation on behalf of the U.S. Government prior to boarding.

Do I have to print the attestation posted on the CDC website before coming the airport? How do air passengers provide an attestation?

As required by United States federal law, all airlines or other aircraft operators will provide and collect the passenger attestation on behalf of the U.S. Government prior to boarding. Please check with the airline or aircraft operator for your flight to learn how the airline or aircraft operator will collect your attestation.

Should I retain proof of a negative test or documentation of recovery and a copy of my attestation?

You are required to retain a paper or digital copy of your negative test result or documentation of recovery for the entirety of your itinerary as federal public health officials may request to see these documents at the port of entry. State, territorial, tribal and/or local health departments in the United States may also request them under their own public health authorities.

The attestation should be submitted to and retained by the airline or aircraft operator.

How long should I keep my COVID-19 test result after reaching my final destination in the United States?

CDC recommends passengers keep their COVID-19 test results for 14 days after reaching their final destination in the United States in case they are requested to show it to a U.S. government official or a cooperation state or local public health authority.

Will CDC reimburse me for the cost of a COVID-19 test?

CDC is not able to reimburse you for COVID-19 testing fees. You may wish to contact your insurance provider or the location that provided your test about payment options.

Timing Requirements

When do I need to get a test to travel to the US?

If you are 2 years or older, you must get tested no more than 1 day before your flight to the US departs.

Why does the Order specify 1 day rather than 24 hours? What is considered 1 day?

The 1-day period is 1 day before the flight's departure. The Order uses a 1-day time frame instead of 24 hours to provide more flexibility to the air passenger and aircraft operator. By using a 1-day window, test acceptability does not depend on the time of the flight or the time of day that the test sample was taken.

For example, if your flight is at 1pm on a Friday, you could board with a negative test that was taken any time on the prior Thursday.


Can a test taken before departure from the U.S. be used to return within the 1-day time frame? How will testing requirements be handled for short trips?

If a trip is shorter than 1 day, a viral test taken in the United States can be used to fulfill the requirements of the Order as long as the specimen was taken no more than 1 day before your return flight to the U.S. departs. If your return travel is delayed longer than 1 day after the test, you will need to be retested before your return flight.

If you are considering this option, you should additionally consider, as a contingency when making your travel plans, the availability of testing capacity at your destination and the time frame needed to obtain results.

What if I am overseas and unable to find a testing site that has a turnaround time of 1 day and can't get tested before my flight?

When making plans for travel, you should consider the availability of testing capacity at your destination and the time frame needed to obtain results.

For more information on where to obtain a test overseas, you should review the relevant [U.S. Embassy website](#) .

If you cannot find a place to get a test with a turnaround time of 1 day, you may consider using a self-test that includes a telehealth service affiliated with the manufacturer of the test that provides real-time supervision remotely through an audio and video connection. See [Does a self-test meet the conditions of the Order?](#)

You may consider contacting the airline regarding options for changing your departure date to allow time for a test, see if the airline has identified options for testing, or if there are options available for changing their flights to transit through a location where you can get tested before boarding your final flight to the United States.

You also have the **option of getting tested en route** during one of your connections. However, you should consider where in the connecting airport testing is available and if you would be able to access it while in transit. If you choose this strategy and are unable to get a test en route, you will not be able to board your flight to the United States. You should also be aware that if you test positive en route, you will not be allowed to continue your travel and may need to stay at that location until you end isolation.

What happens if I don't take a test and want to travel to the U.S.?

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 you choose not to present a test result or documentation of recovery, the airline must not allow you to board.

Positive Test or COVID-19 Exposure

What happens if I test positive?

You should [self-isolate](#) and delay your travel if you develop symptoms or your pre-departure test result is positive, until you [meet criteria to travel](#). Airlines must refuse to board anyone who does not present a negative test result for COVID-19 or documentation of recovery.

If I test positive for COVID-19, and then test negative, can I travel?

If you know or suspect that you have COVID-19, you should self-isolate and NOT travel until you have met CDC's [criteria to travel](#).

What happens if I have a negative test, but my travel companion tests positive before our flight to the United States?

If you had close contact with a person with COVID-19 and are recommended to [quarantine](#), you should quarantine and [not travel until 5 days](#) after your last close contact with the person with COVID-19. It is best to avoid travel for 10 days after your last close contact; however, if you must travel during days 6-10 after your last close contact, follow [CDC guidance](#). If you are [up to date](#) on your COVID-19 vaccines, or have documentation of recovery from COVID-19 in the past 90 days, you do not have to self-quarantine after exposure to a person with COVID-19 but should follow [CDC guidance](#) before traveling.

Connecting or Delayed Flights

If I fly from a U.S. state or territory to another U.S. state or territory, but have to connect through a foreign country, am I still required to get a test?

If you booked an itinerary from a U.S. state or territory to another U.S. state or territory and the itinerary has you taking a connecting flight through a foreign country, CDC does not require that you be tested. An example of this situation is an itinerary booked between the Northern Mariana Islands (a U.S. territory) and the U.S. mainland via Japan.

However, some U.S. [state and local](#) governments and foreign governments may have their own testing requirements for air passengers arriving in their jurisdictions that may differ from U.S. federal requirements. Always check and follow recommendations or requirements related to travel to your destination in addition to U.S. federal requirements.

If I am connecting through the U.S. to another country, do I still need to get tested?

Yes. Any flight entering the U.S. from a foreign country, even for a connection, will require testing before departure.

If I have one or more connecting flights to get to the U.S., does the 1-day period apply to the first flight or the last one?

If your itinerary has you arriving to the US via one or more connecting flights, your test can be taken within 1 day before the departure of the **first flight**.

You also have the **option of getting tested en route** during one of your connections. However, you should consider where in the connecting airport testing is available and if you would be able to access it while in transit. If you choose this strategy and are unable to get a test en route, you will not be able to board your flight to the United States. You should also be aware that if you test positive en route, you will not be allowed to continue your travel and may need to stay at that location until you end isolation.

Please note, if you planned an itinerary incorporating one or more overnight stays en route to the US, you will need to make sure your test is not expired before your flight that will enter the US. You do not need to be retested if the itinerary requires an overnight connection because of limitations in flight availability.

What happens if my flight is delayed past the 1-day limit for testing?

If the **first flight** in your trip is delayed past the 1-day limit of testing due to a situation outside of your control (e.g., delays because of severe weather or aircraft mechanical problem), and that delay is **24 hours** or less past the 1-day limit for testing, you do not need to be retested. If the delay is more than **24 hours** past the 1-day limit, then you will need to be retested.

If a **connecting flight** in your trip is delayed past the 1-day limit of testing due to a situation outside of your control (e.g., delays because of severe weather or aircraft mechanical problem), and that delay is less than **48 hours** past the 1-day limit for testing, you do not need to be retested. If the delay is more than **48 hours** past the 1-day limit, then you will need to be retested.

Can CDC help me get a refund for travel expenses if I have to cancel or delay travel because of testing requirements for air passengers flying to the U.S.?

CDC does not reimburse and is unable to help travelers get reimbursements for travel expenses because of canceled or delayed travel due to COVID-19 or testing requirements for air passengers flying to the US. While some companies may base their policies on CDC's travel recommendations or requirements, each company establishes its own refund policies.

In some cases, trip cancellation insurance can protect your financial investment in a trip if you need to change your itinerary in the event of an international outbreak. Visit CDC's [Travelers' Health website](#) if you would like to learn more about travel insurance, including trip cancellation insurance.

Exemptions


Can I get an exemption to the testing requirement?

Exemptions may be granted on an extremely limited basis when emergency travel (like an emergency medical evacuation) must occur to preserve someone's life, health against a serious danger, or physical safety and testing cannot be completed before travel.

How do I apply for a humanitarian exemption to the requirement to show a pre-departure negative COVID-19 test or documentation of recovery?

CDC may grant a humanitarian exemption in very limited circumstances only when an individual must travel to the United States to preserve health (e.g., emergency medical evacuations) or safety (e.g., violence) and is unable to access or complete the testing requirement before travel.

Individuals who fit the exemption criteria described in CDC's [Order](#) may contact the U.S. embassy or consulate in or nearest the country from which they are departing for the United States. The embassy will then transmit this information to the CDC for consideration.

Please review the procedures for applying for a humanitarian exemption as listed on the webpage of the embassy or consulate where you will apply. This link will lead you to the relevant embassy or consulate: <https://www.usembassy.gov> 

To facilitate the review of a humanitarian exemption request, individuals should submit the following information to the embassy or consulate for transmission to the CDC. *All information needs to be completed in full and in English for the request to be sent to CDC.*

- Name (family name/surname, given name)
- Age
- U.S. Citizen, U.S. National, Lawful Permanent Resident?
 - If no:
 - Nationality
 - Indicate Visa Type or if passenger has Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)
- Cell phone number (including country code) of passenger or head of household if family unit
- Email address of passenger or head of household if family unit
- US destination address
 - Is US destination home address?
- Flight itinerary, including any connecting flights
 - Airline
 - Flight #
 - Departure airport and date of departure
 - Arrival airport and date of arrival
- Vaccination Status
 - If [fully vaccinated](#), must provide
 - Name of vaccine product (or products if a combination)
 - Date of first dose
 - Date of second dose (if a two-dose series)
 - PDF or photograph of vaccination record
 - NOT Fully Vaccinated
- Purpose of travel to the US and a brief explanation of why urgent travel is needed
- Justification for humanitarian exemption for **testing requirement** (e.g., no testing available where passenger is located)
- Documentation to support justification (e.g., medical records, orders for emergency evacuation)
- Information regarding any other solutions that were sought prior to application (e.g., flight changes, testing en route, assistance in obtaining testing/vaccination, etc.)

What if I have tested positive for COVID-19 and need medical evacuation to the United States?

Private flights or general aviation aircraft may transport a patient who has tested positive, or exposed contacts if they adhere to CDC's [Interim Guidance for Transporting or Arranging Transportation by Air into, from, or within the United](#)

