



# GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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## United States - Border Restrictions Extended for 30 Days with Canada, Mexico

In light of the ongoing coronavirus health emergency, on June 16, 2020, the United States (U.S.) announced that the land borders with Canada and Mexico will remain closed to non-essential travel until at least July 21, 2020.<sup>1</sup> The restriction on non-essential travel is also applicable to travelers seeking admission to the U.S. via ferry and commuter rail.

The restriction on non-essential travel to the U.S. via land, ferry, or commuter rail was originally implemented on March 21, 2020, for an initial period of 30 days and has subsequently been extended in 30-day increments. (For prior coverage, see GMS [Flash Alert 2020-240](#), May 21, 2020.) U.S., Canadian, and Mexican officials have agreed to extend the land border restrictions in order to limit the spread of COVID-19.

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### WHY THIS MATTERS

The travel restrictions in force at the land borders are likely to continue to impact employers and their employees who frequently travel between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Those who seek admission by car, foot, ferry, or commuter rail must be prepared to explain how their activities are essential. It is prudent for persons traveling to the U.S. by land, ferry, or commuter rail to provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) with documentation explaining the essential nature of their travel.

Although air travel is not affected at this time, those traveling to the U.S. by air have experienced additional scrutiny upon entry and are advised to travel with documentation describing the nature of their intended activities in the country.

As a reminder, persons who have been present in any of the countries covered by the temporary travel bans related to COVID-19 (i.e., the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, People's Republic of China, Iran, nations in the European Schengen area, and Brazil) in the 14 days preceding their scheduled arrival in the U.S. will not be allowed to enter the country.

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## What Is Essential Travel?

The U.S. has confirmed that entry via land, ferry, or commuter rail will be limited to only those engaged in “essential travel.”

The temporary land border closure should not impact trade between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, or disrupt critical supply chains of food, fuel, medicine, and other essentials.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has discretion to determine what qualifies as essential travel. Authorities may also determine that travel in furtherance of economic stability or social order is essential. Such determination can extend to humanitarian services or other purposes considered to be in the national interest.

Further communications have emphasized that those who work in a critical infrastructure industry, as defined by the DHS, have a special responsibility to maintain their normal work schedule.

## Who Is Exempt from Restrictions?

A non-exhaustive list of persons confirmed as exempt from the restriction on U.S. entry by land, ferry, or commuter rail is as follows:

- U.S. citizens and returning lawful permanent residents;
- Individuals traveling for medical purposes (e.g., to receive medical treatment in the U.S.);
- Individuals traveling to attend educational institutions;
- Individuals traveling to work in the U.S. (e.g., individuals working in the farming or agriculture industry who must travel between the U.S. and Canada in furtherance of such work);
- Individuals traveling for emergency response and public health purposes (e.g., government officials or emergency responders entering the U.S. to support federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial government efforts to respond to COVID-19 or other emergencies);
- Individuals engaged in lawful cross-border trade (e.g., truck drivers supporting the movement of cargo between the U.S. and Canada);
- Individuals engaged in official government travel or diplomatic travel;
- Members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and the spouses and children of members of the U.S. Armed Forces, returning to the U.S.; and
- Individuals engaged in military-related travel or operations.

## FOOTNOTE:

1 [Fact Sheet](#): Department of Homeland Security Measures on the Border to Limit the Further Spread of Coronavirus.

06/16/2020 [Acting Secretary Wolf's Statement](#) on Extension of Non-Essential Travel Restrictions with Canada and Mexico.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection [Notification of Temporary Travel Restrictions Applicable to Land Ports and Ferries](#) published March 20, 2020 in 19 C.F.R.

List of Travelers Prohibited from Entry to the U.S. posted on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) web site.

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## Contact us

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