

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

2020-051 | February 8, 2021



Canada: Increased Measures Announced for International Travellers

To prevent further introduction and transmission of COVID-19 and its new variants into Canada, the government of Canada is imposing new, stricter measures for travellers to Canada.¹

WHY THIS MATTERS

Due to growing concerns of new variants of the COVID-19 virus, the Canadian government is introducing additional measures to discourage travel to and from Canada. Foreign nationals, Canadian citizens, and permanent residents travelling to Canada will soon have to arrange for COVID-19 tests upon arrival, hotel accommodations, and more, to avoid delays in their travel to Canada. These individuals, including those currently in Canada who are planning to travel abroad, should consider how they will meet the new requirements before their departure. Non-compliance could result in penalties.

On-Arrival COVID-19 Testing and Mandatory Hotel Quarantine Requirements

Canada is adopting new measures to discourage non-essential travel. Travellers must continue to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 molecular test taken within 72 hours before departing to Canada. In the coming weeks, air travellers, with very limited exceptions, will also be required to:

- take a COVID-19 molecular test on arrival to Canada; and
- quarantine in a government-approved hotel room for up to three nights, at their own expense.

Travellers will be required to pay for the COVID-19 test, their hotel, and any associated costs such as food, transportation, and security while they wait for the results of their on-arrival COVID-19 test.

All hotels will be located near one of the four major Canadian airports accepting international flights, including: Vancouver International Airport, Calgary International Airport, Toronto Pearson International Airport, and Montreal-Trudeau International Airport. **A full list of hotels will be available shortly.**²

Individuals who receive a positive test result from their on-arrival molecular test will have to complete their quarantine in a designated quarantine facility, costs of which will be covered by the government. Those who receive a negative test result and demonstrate they have a suitable quarantine plan can complete their 14-day quarantine at their place of residence, with enhanced surveillance. **More details will be available in the coming days.**

New COVID-19 Testing Requirements for Land Travellers

Currently, only air travellers are required to obtain a negative COVID-19 test result 72 hours before arriving in Canada. However, the Canadian government is expected to implement a similar pre-arrival COVID-19 molecular test requirement for travellers entering Canada by land, subject to certain limited exceptions.³ **More details will be available in the coming days.**

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) Introducing Stricter Quarantine Checks

To help ensure travellers comply with the mandatory 14-day quarantine requirement, PHAC is working with private security companies to help complete compliance checks for travellers arriving in Canada. Designated 'Screening Officers' will be authorized to visit travellers at their quarantine locations to **establish contact, confirm identity, and confirm that travellers are at the quarantine residence identified upon entry to Canada.** These new officers will conduct regular visits in 35 cities across Canada, beginning in Montreal and Toronto.⁴

Screening Officers may provide compliance education or issue verbal warnings, as required. PHAC will follow-up on any cases that warrant stronger enforcement action. Violating any quarantine or isolation instructions provided to travellers by a Screening Officer is an offence under the *Quarantine Act* and could lead to serious penalties, including six months in prison and/or C\$750,000 in fines.

Changes to Alberta's International Border Testing Pilot

Previously, travellers who participated in the International Border Testing Pilot could leave their place of quarantine after receiving their first negative test result, so long as they committed to obtaining a second test on day 6 or 7 after arriving in Canada. As of January 25, participants must remain in quarantine until they receive their second negative test result, which will typically be obtained on the 7th or 8th day after arriving in Canada.

Travellers arriving in Alberta that have been in the United Kingdom or South Africa in the last 14 days must quarantine and cannot participate in the Border Pilot.

The Pilot is currently under review in light of the new travel rules announced by the government of Canada on January 29, 2020. **More information will be available soon.**⁵

Expansion of International Flight Restrictions at Canadian Airports

Effective January 31, 2021, the Canadian government and Canadian airlines have agreed to suspend all flights to and from Mexico and Caribbean countries until April 30, 2021.⁶

Throughout the pandemic, international commercial passenger flights have been required to land at one of the four major Canadian airports in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, or Vancouver. Effective February 3, 2021, the following types of flights will also be required to land at these airports:

- Scheduled commercial passenger flights from the U.S., Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America;
- International business and/or private passenger flights from all countries; and
- International charter passenger flights from all countries.

Flights from Saint-Pierre-et Miquelon and cargo-only international flights will remain exempt from this new requirement.

KPMG NOTE

Key Considerations for Employers and Travellers

- Travellers should prepare a quarantine plan that factors in the new on-arrival COVID-19 testing and hotel requirements;
- With the new mandatory hotel requirements, travellers can expect to pay up to C\$2,000 or more to cover hotel expenses and associated costs while they wait for their on-arrival COVID-19 test results; and
- Travellers should regularly monitor changes to travel restrictions before leaving or returning to Canada.

The government of Canada strongly advises against non-essential travel outside Canada as there may be sudden restrictions and additional requirements that place travellers in difficult and stressful circumstances while abroad.

Employees and travellers who have concerns about their upcoming travels and next steps are encouraged to contact their usual travel agent and/or immigration adviser or KPMG Law LLP (see the Contact Us section for further guidance).

FOOTNOTES:

1 See January 29 news release “Government of Canada introduces further restrictions on international travel” at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/transport-canada/news/2021/01/government-of-canada-introduces-further-restrictions-on-international-travel.html>.

2 See the government of Canada webpage “COVID-19: Mandatory hotel stay for all air travellers arriving in Canada” at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice/mandatory-hotel-stay-air-travellers.html>.

3 See January 29 news release “Government of Canada introduces further restrictions on international travel” at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/transport-canada/news/2021/01/government-of-canada-introduces-further-restrictions-on-international-travel.html>.

4 See the Transport Canada webpage “Canada to implement new testing and quarantine measures to reduce COVID-19 infection related to non-essential international air travel” at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/transport-canada/news/2021/01/canada-to-implement-new-testing-and-quarantine-measures-to-reduce-covid-19-infection-related-to-non-essential-international-air-travel.html>.

5 See the government of Alberta webpage “International Border Testing Pilot Program” at: <https://www.alberta.ca/international-border-pilot-project.aspx>.

6 See the Transport Canada webpage “Expansion of international flight restrictions at Canadian airports” at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/transport-canada/news/2021/01/expansion-of-international-flight-restrictions-at-canadian-airports.html>.

* * * *

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]:



Naumaan Hameed
Partner – Canadian Practice Leader,
Immigration

KPMG Law LLP – Tax + Immigration,
Canada

Tel. +1-416-777-3181

nhameed@kpmg.ca



Yomna Khatib
Senior Associate, Canadian
Immigration

KPMG Law LLP – Tax + Immigration,
Canada

Tel. +1-416-943-7762

ykhatib@kpmg.ca



Amira Zubairi
Articling Student, Canadian
Immigration

KPMG Law LLP – Tax + Immigration,
Canada

Tel. +1-416-943-7889

amirazubairi@kpmg.ca

** 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 Canada.

© 2021 KPMG Law LLP, a tax and immigration law firm affiliated with KPMG LLP, each of which is a Canadian limited liability partnership. KPMG LLP is a Canadian limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG network of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Cooperative (“KPMG International”), a Swiss entity. All rights reserved.

www.kpmg.com

kpmg.com/socialmedia



© 2021 KPMG LLP, a Delaware limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. NDPPS 530159

The KPMG name and logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of KPMG International. The KPMG name and logo are trademarks used under license by the independent member firms of the KPMG global organization.

KPMG LLP is the U.S. firm of the KPMG global organization of independent professional services firms providing Audit, Tax and Advisory services. The KPMG global organization operates in 147 countries and territories and has more than 219,000 people working in member firms around the world.

Each KPMG firm is a legally distinct and separate entity and describes itself as such. KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee. KPMG International Limited and its related entities do not provide services to clients.

Flash Alert is a GMS publication of KPMG LLP’s Washington National Tax practice. To view this publication or recent prior issues online, please click [here](#). To learn more about our GMS practice, please visit us on the Internet: click [here](#) or go to <http://www.kpmg.com>.