



COVID-19 GUIDANCE MATERIAL FOR AIR OPERATORS

Managing Travellers Coming to Canada from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China or the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

This guidance material is intended to provide recommendations and guidance on the operationalization of Transport Canada's Interim Order, [Interim Order Respecting Certain Requirements for Civil Aviation Due to COVID-19](#).

This document also includes material related to key aspects of the Public Health Agency of Canada's Emergency Order [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order](#).

Important Caveat: Nothing in this guidance document supersedes any requirement or obligation outlined in Transport Canada's Interim Order or the Public Health Agency of Canada's Emergency Order. It is meant to complement these legal documents and provide recommendations and guidance on how to understand and carry out the requirements.

OVERVIEW

This guidance material, dated January 5, 2023 (version 12.1), replaces the September 15, 2022 version. It outlines the new restrictions in place to manage travellers 2 years of age or older boarding a flight to Canada originating from the People's Republic of China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China or the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. To board, these travellers must show evidence of a COVID-19 molecular or antigen test prior to boarding.

Air operators have an obligation to notify each traveller of this requirement prior to boarding a flight to Canada using their respective business models. Sample communications have been prepared to assist air operators in notifying passengers of this requirement before their trip ([Annex A](#)).

Section 2 - Pre-board Process

To facilitate the smooth air travel journey for travellers and as little operational disruption as possible for air operators, it is *recommended* that upon arrival at the airport, travellers present themselves to the check-in counter to provide their COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result. The agent at check-in can verify the result against the required criteria below and then either: 1) allow the traveller to continue with their journey; or 2) stop them before they continue onwards to check their baggage. This will avoid having to reconcile baggage should a traveller check their bag and then get denied boarding at the gate. In the end however, it is the air carrier's decision as to how the process is implemented.

Section 3 - Boarding Process

The following identifies the requirements of air operators in the boarding process as it relates to the COVID-19 measures outlined in the *Interim Order*. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a fine.

Verification Requirements of Air Operators:

- Air operators must verify the COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result to ensure it includes the following (unless the traveller is exempt). For exemptions, please see [Annex B](#):
 - Name and date of birth of the person from whom the specimen was collected for the test;
 - Name and civic address of the accredited laboratory or testing provider that performed or observed the test and verified result;
 - Date the specimen was collected and the test method used (molecular or antigen); and
 - Test result.

The test result must meet the following criteria:

- **COVID-19 Molecular Test or Antigen Test**
 - **Negative** COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result performed by an accredited laboratory or testing provider no more than 2 days before the flight's initial scheduled departure time OR
 - **Positive** COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result taken at least 10 days and no more than 90 days before the flight's initial scheduled departure time. Counting starts the day following the day of testing.

- **Self-administered Test**

- Self-administered molecular tests and antigen results are also accepted. The test must be observed by an authorized entity, the result verified, and the requirements noted above followed.

Note: “not detected” is accepted as equivalent to negative; however, if the test result indicates “inconclusive”, this is not acceptable; the traveller is to be denied boarding.

Please refer to [Annex C](#) for further information on pre-departure testing.

It should be noted that it is the traveller’s responsibility to be informed on requirements and to have proof of their COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result either printed or in electronic form. The language of the test is not specified, however if it is not in English or French, travellers may face processing delays.

Air carriers are strongly recommended to inform travellers that they are to retain the evidence of their COVID-19 test result until they leave the airport in Canada as they could be requested to show their documentation by the Minister of Health, screening officer or quarantine officer.

Important: Air carriers are only responsible for checking the COVID-19 test result prior to boarding if the flights are included on a single itinerary for trips originating from the People’s Republic of China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China, or the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China even if the traveller transits through another country prior to arriving in Canada,. In the case where the traveller is travelling to Canada but is transiting through another country and their flights are on separate itineraries, the test result does not need to be checked.

- **Example #1:** A traveller is travelling from Beijing-Germany-Canada. Their flights are on one single itinerary. In this case, the air carrier **is required** to verify a COVID-19 test result prior to boarding in Beijing.
- **Example #2:** A traveller is travelling from Bangkok-Beijing-Vancouver. In this case, since the traveller is only transiting through Beijing, the air carrier is **not required** to verify a COVID-19 test result prior to boarding (unless the traveller is in transit for more than 24 hours before the flight’s initial scheduled departure time, in which case, verification would be required).
- **Example #3:** A traveller is travelling from Beijing-Germany-Canada. Their flights are on two separate itineraries since the traveller has a 72-hour stay in Germany. In this case, the air carrier is **not required** to verify a COVID-19 test result prior to boarding in Beijing.

In-Transit or Entering the Airspace over Canada

A person in transit in the People’s Republic of China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China or the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China for a period of 24 hours or less before the flight’s initial scheduled departure time or a person who enters the airspace over Canada on board an aircraft (but does not land while in Canada) **does not need to provide a COVID-19 test result.**

Section 4 – Denial of Boarding

The air operator is to deny boarding in any of the following cases as it relates to the provisions outlined in the *Interim Order*:

1. **Pre-departure COVID-19 test:** the traveller will be refused boarding if they fail to meet any of the following:
 - Name of traveller does not match the traveller's identification
 - Date of birth of traveller is missing
 - Name and civic address of the accredited laboratory or testing provider that performed or observed the test and verified result is missing
 - Test result is **negative** but was not conducted within the valid testing window (no more than 2 days before the flight's initial scheduled departure time to Canada);
 - Test result is **positive** but was not conducted within the valid testing window (at least 10 days but not more than 90 days from the scheduled departure time to Canada). For example, the traveller would be denied boarding if they had a positive test administered less than 11 days (which is 10 days or less) or more than 90 days from their scheduled departure to Canada;
 - Test result is **inconclusive**;
 - Test result is not for a molecular or antigen test; or
 - Traveller refuses to provide proof of a test.

Note: If there is any uncertainty, the air carrier may contact Transport Canada's Air Carrier Support Center by telephone at 1-844-880-6527 or by email at TC.AviationSecurity-Sureteaerienne.TC@tc.gc.ca for guidance; however, it should be noted that Transport Canada will not make the final board/no-board decision.

If a Canadian Citizen is denied boarding, the air operator should:

- Inform air travellers that, the Government of Canada provides consular service to Canadians. Canadian government offices abroad do not provide medical attention (including administering COVID-19 molecular testing) or cover medical expenses for Canadian citizens abroad but can provide direction to resources.
- Encourage Canadians travelling abroad to register with the [Registration of Canadians Abroad](#) if they have not done so already. This service enables Canadians to receive important safety updates from the Government of Canada.

ANNEX A - Sample Email to Send to Travellers

Subject: Government of Canada COVID-19 Travel Measures for Travellers Departing from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China or the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

Good day,

The Government of Canada requires all travellers 2 years of age or older boarding a flight to Canada originating from the People's Republic of China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, or the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China to provide evidence of a COVID-19 molecular test or antigen test prior to boarding.

To board a flight to Canada, all travellers, even if fully vaccinated, must present one of the following:

- test result that is **negative**, that was administered **no more than 2 days before of the traveller's initial scheduled departure time** to Canada (must be no more than 2 days from the initial scheduled flight to Canada); or
- test result that is **positive**, that was administered **at least 10 days but no more than 90 days** before the flight's initial scheduled departure time to Canada.

To avoid processing delays, all COVID-19 test results should be in either English or French.

For more information on any of Canada's currently travel restrictions, please visit <https://travel.gc.ca/>.

We hope you enjoy your trip to Canada. Stay safe and be well.

ANNEX B – Exemptions: Summary Information

The following table depicts those exempt from providing evidence of a COVID-19 molecular or antigen test prior to boarding as outlined in the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Order in Council (OIC) entitled [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order](#).

Cohort	Exempt from Providing Evidence of a COVID-19 molecular or antigen test
<p>Crew member of an aircraft.</p> <p>A crew member is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a crew member as defined in subsection 101.01(1) of the Canadian Aviation Regulations or a person who enters Canada only to become such a crew member; or • a member of a crew as defined in subsection 3(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations or a person who enters Canada only to become such a member of a crew. 	Yes
<p>A person who is less than two years of age.</p>	Yes
<p>A person or any member of a class of persons for whom the release from the requirements to provide evidence of a COVID-19 molecular test or evidence of a COVID-19 antigen test set out in subsection (1), as determined by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration or the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, is in the national interest, if the person complies with the conditions imposed on them by the relevant Minister in consultation with the Minister of Health to minimize the risk of introduction or spread of COVID-19.</p>	Yes
<p>A person or any member of a class of persons who enters Canada on board a conveyance organized by the Government of Canada, who is authorized by the Minister of Health, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to be evacuated from a country and who, as determined by the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, is in exigent circumstances and suffering hardship, if the person complies with the conditions imposed on them by the Minister of Health to minimize the risk of introduction or spread of COVID-19.</p>	Yes
<p>A person who is not required under the <i>Aeronautics Act</i> to provide evidence of a COVID-19 molecular test or evidence of a COVID-19 antigen test.</p>	Yes
<p>A person who was in transit in the People’s Republic of China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China or the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China for a period of 24 hours or less before the flight’s initial scheduled departure time.</p>	Yes

Cohort	Exempt from Providing Evidence of a COVID-19 molecular or antigen test
A person who enters the airspace over Canada on board an aircraft if the person is continuously on board the aircraft while in Canada and the aircraft does not land while in Canada.	Yes

ANNEX C – Additional Information on Pre-Departure COVID-19 Testing

COVID-19 Test Results

Type of Test	Details of Calculation
<p>negative COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result performed by an accredited laboratory or testing provider no more than 2 days before the flight's initial scheduled departure time</p> <p>OR</p> <p>negative self-administered COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result that was observed (with result verified) by an accredited laboratory or testing provider no more than 2 days before the flight's initial scheduled departure time</p>	<p>A traveller has a flight scheduled to Canada on Friday, March 4, 2023. They arrive at the airport with a valid molecular COVID-19 test result that is negative. The date stamp on the test result indicates March 2, 2023, for when the test was administered. The air carrier can use March 4 less 2 days, which brings us to March 2nd, as their basis to determine whether or not to board the traveller as indicated below in the following sample calculation:</p> <p><u>Calculation:</u> From March 4 to March 3 (-1 day from departure) From March 3 to March 2 (- 2 days from departure) **limit** = test is valid if administered on March 2nd or later</p>
<p>previous positive COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result taken at least 10 days and no more than 90 days before the flight's initial scheduled departure time. Counting starts the day following the day of testing.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>positive self-administered COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result that was observed (with result verified) by an accredited laboratory or testing provider at least 10 days and no more than 90 days before the flight's initial scheduled departure time. Counting starts the day following the day of testing.</p>	<p>Example: a traveller who takes a test on February 1 will be eligible to fly on February 11.</p> <p>Date of Test: February 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Day 1: February 2 ▪ Day 2: February 3 ▪ Day 3: February 4 ▪ Day 4: February 5 ▪ Day 5: February 6 ▪ Day 6: February 7 ▪ Day 7: February 8 ▪ Day 8: February 9 ▪ Day 9: February 10 <p>Day 10 - Eligible to fly - February 11</p>