

# In the Know-se: Current Covid Crew Requirements

OPSGROUP Team  
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Covid has been around for nearly a year, and we have seen countries closed, reopen, close again, slightly close, close to some, not to others... It has been an **endless jumble of restrictions**, sticks up your snout, and “are you or aren’t you allowed” confusion.

So, we thought we would provide a quick summary of the current **Covid Air Crew restrictions**, because, after all, these are what you probably want to know.

## **AmeriCan if you’re crew**

The US want proof of a negative Covid test for passengers - that’s a PCR or antigen test, and it needs to have been taken a maximum 72 hours before travel. This covers all flights. That means private flights, GA flights, chartered balloons, even people who find a way to ride in on giant pigeons...



Unless it is an official carrier pigeon and you are on active duty...

However, **ACTIVE** crew are exempt.

So for crew travelling to the US – you don't need to get a Covid test in advance as long as you're "active crew" – i.e. you're **operating the flight** or travelling in an assigned **deadhead status** (i.e. positioning crew into the US). You also have to follow the health and safety rules set out in the FAA's SAFO 20009.

We've had some reports of issues when positioning crew into the US, with gate staff requiring they show proof of a Covid test. To be clear: deadheading/positioning crew are officially exempt from this requirement, as per the CDC guidance found here.

Try to connect with the carrier being used in support of deadheading crew to verify their processes and documentation requirements. **One thing to try:** the NBAA has developed a template letter for deadheading/positioning crew to use for these situations. Print it out, fill it in, and send it in advance to the carrier you're flying in with, and ask for written confirmation back from them to mitigate against any last-minute issues at the gate.

Maintenance personnel and contractors are also exempted if their travel is for the purpose of operating the aircraft, or ensuring the safety of flight ops.

## **Canadarghhh**

Canada recently changed their entry restrictions for all, and they are only allowing passenger flights to fly into CYUL/Montreal, CYYC/Calgary, CYYZ/Toronto or CYVR/Vancouver.

Despite the clampdown, crew are still exempt provided they are on duty.

Annex G contains the Template Letter for Crew confirming they are on active duty which you should make sure your crew have with them. The exemption covers quarantine and Covid testing.

**RIDE WITH THE MOUNTIES AS THEY TACKLE THEIR TOUGHEST ASSIGNMENT!!**



# **CANADIAN MOUNTIES vs. VIRUS INVADERS**

**BILL HENRY • SUSAN MORROW • ARTHUR SPACE  
DALE VAN SICKEL • PIERRE WATKIN  
A REPUBLIC SERIAL IN 12 CHAPTERS**

Republic Pictures Corporation

Herbert J. Yates, President



Real movie

## **Chi-not the place to go**

Aside from locally based Chinese crew being asked to wear nappies, the information for air crew is tough to pin down for China. We think it is this - **every airport is different.**

The China Airlines Immigration page has the most useful information, and where it refers to C Visa, this is the bit you want to look at because that's what crew will have.

Generally, you seem to be able to enter and stay overnight in a crew rest hotel without 14 days of quarantine, but your best bet is to confirm with a local airport agent (operations@groundexpress.aero have been really helpful).

## The goings on in Hong Kong

From January 23, any air crew who have visited somewhere deemed Extremely High Risk will have to self-isolate in a designated quarantine hotel for 21 days... we think this might just apply to local crew though, because it goes on to say -

All non-local based crew [*who have been to Extremely High Risk areas*] must have a negative PCR taken with 48 hours, and must undergo another test on arrival and remain in isolation until a negative result is received. They call this their **Test and Hold** procedure.

If the crew were not in an extremely high risk place up to 21 days before going to Hong Kong then you still need the PCR test taken 48 hours before, and the arrival test, but you can stay at your airline-organized hotel instead.

The official website is here.

## Are U(o)K?

The UK has seen a lot of changes to their entry restrictions over the year. After they discovered a right royal variant of their own, they *locked down* (and pretty much every other country in the world *locked them out*). Then the cases of other mutant variants starting popping up all over the world so the UK closed their borders to a whole bunch of countries.

What does this mean for crew though?

It means that if you are foreign flight crew and have been in (or even transited through) a banned country in the last 10 days then you will **not be granted access to the UK**. If you are a UK citizen or resident then you can enter, but will have to self-isolate for 10 days. The list of banned countries is here.

This is the bit we are talking about - the Travel Exemptions list, which lists **jobs exempt from restrictions**. The top message is pretty conclusive we think - even exempted jobs are not exempt if they are coming from/ have recently been to a country currently banned.

## Travel bans

These exemptions are not valid for [countries from where travel to the UK is currently banned](#).

Hauliers travelling from Portugal are not covered by the travel ban and are permitted to travel to the UK.

This bit right 'ere

## Europtions...

Europe has a lot of countries in it and all of them have their own regulations and restrictions. Here are the "big" ones.

**France** is getting a bit more restrictive with passengers of late, and borders are closing to a lot of higher risk countries – and to anyone who doesn't have legitimate and essential reasons to be travelling there. The UK and non-EU countries are pretty much banned at this point.

For the crew, the requirements haven't changed (as of February 3). You need to fill out a Passenger Locator Form, but are exempt from all the other isolation requirements (isolation and tests).

Swissport in LFMN/Nice keep a great little table regularly updated with all the latest rules in France for pax and crew, depending on where they're flying in from.

**Germany** are closing their borders to all places where mutated viruses can be found as well. That means the UK, Ireland, South Africa, Portugal, Brazil, Lesotho and Eswatini so far.

Watch out here – crew need a Covid test in advance if you've been in certain countries within the past 10 days (EDWW mega-Notam B0123 carries that announcement).

Germany classifies other countries into four groups: No Risk Areas, Risk Areas, High Incidence Areas, and Areas of Variant Concern (this government page has the latest details on which countries fall into each of these groups). Crew who have been in *Areas of Variant Concern* within the past 10 days must have a Covid test taken within 48 hours, and pre-register electronically. Crew who have been in *High Incidence Areas* within the past 10 days are only exempt from these requirements if they're staying in Germany for less than 72 hours.

### **Austrailing behind...**

Australia remain very restrictive on how many international travellers they let into their country, and there are a lot of restrictions and requirements in place for entry. Luckily, for air crew, you are exempt. You do need to stay in your hotel during the layover though. Here is their official page on this.

### **Say Dubai-bye to restrictions**

Dubai have remained fairly lax on their restrictions and lockdown measures, and as a result people who have been through Dubai are now being classified as high risk when they go to other places.

But for crew heading to Dubai, it is fairly straightforward – no Covid test required on arrival but if you want to move freely around Dubai during your layover then you can either bring a negative test result with you (taken 72 hours before), or get one on arrival (takes about 24 hours) and wait in your hotel until the results are received.

### **In and out of India**

India have a general ban on scheduled international flights, except under special approval or existing bubbles. This ban does not mention charter flights and local agents have confirmed that GA/BA can come in, but just need prior approval.

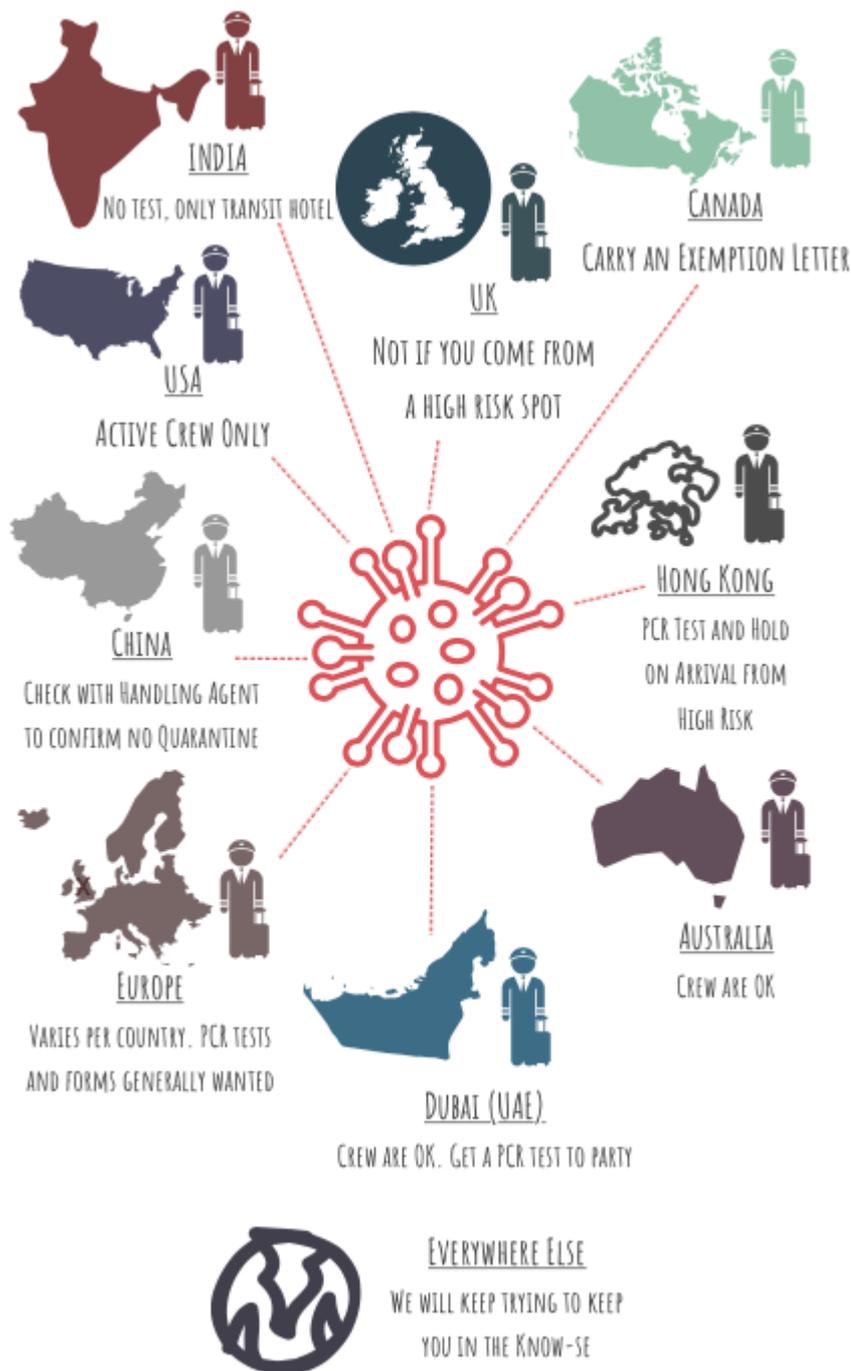
For crew on these flights, you are going to need a valid visa, but no test is required. However, if you don't have one, then you are only able to stay in transit hotels in VIDP/Delhi and VABB/Mumbai.

### **Where else in the World is there?**

Lots of places, obv! And with restrictions changing almost daily, it's tough to keep up.

**Pre-departure Covid tests** are fast becoming the new thing, with more and more countries around the world starting to make this a **mandatory requirement**. For a quick check of each country's rules for passengers, go here.

Often the **crew requirements** are not published alongside the passenger ones, so we will keep digging for this information, and the alerts we publish will try to give you the main passenger changes, and the crew requirements where we can.



The Covid Infoknow

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## US to require Covid tests for all international

# passengers

David Mumford  
3 February, 2021



From January 26, **all international passengers need a negative Covid test** that is less than 72 hours old to board a flight to the US.

The US CDC has published the **full details of the requirements here**, and they've done a good job too – it includes a pretty thorough Q&A section split into separate sections for passengers and crew.

## Here's a summary of the main points:

- All international travellers aged two years or older need a test, including citizens and foreigners.
- Applies to all flights, including private and charter flights.
- Applies only to international flights – from “anywhere that is not a state, territory, or possession of the United States”. Therefore, passengers do not need a test if coming from: American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.
- It needs to be a “viral test” (NAAT or antigen test) – antibody tests will not be accepted. The PCR test is a type of NAAT test (Nucleic Acid Amplification Test), so those are accepted. You can read more about the different types of tests [here](#).
- The test must be done within three calendar days of departure to the US. If passengers have one or more connecting flights to the US, it gets a bit more complicated.
- Airlines and operators will need to check that their passengers meet the requirements prior to travel.
- **For crew travelling to the US:** you don't need to get a Covid test in advance as long as you're “active crew” – i.e. you're operating the flight or travelling in an assigned deadhead status. You also have to follow the health and safety rules set out in the FAA's SAFO 20009.

However, we've had several reports saying that if you are positioning crew into the US via an airline for any reason, the reality is that you will likely be asked to show proof of a Covid test. More guidance on the definition of "active crew", check out the CDC's dedicated webpage.

- If crew/pax can prove they have already had Covid, have recovered from it, and can provide documentation to this effect, they don't need to get a test.
- Operators must distribute and collect Passenger Attestation Forms prior to embarkation, and keep copies of these for 2 years. Operators do not need to keep copies of passenger test results.
- If you're heading out of the US, and plan to return within 72hrs, you will still need a test. You can get this done in the US before you leave. But if you end up staying out of the US for more than 72hrs, you will need to be retested before your return flight.
- **Quarantine rules:** Technically, all pax inbound to the US now have to quarantine for 10 days upon arrival, as per the Executive Order that went into effect on Jan 26. However, it looks like the CDC will not actually be enforcing this - at least for now.

**Important to note:** the old rules banning certain pax from entry still stands: with specific exemptions, foreign nationals who have been present within the past 14 days in the European Schengen area, the UK and Ireland, mainland China, Iran, and Brazil will still be barred from entry - with or without a negative test. The 'specific exemptions' part basically means this: US residents and family members, and flight crew traveling to the United States on C, D or C1/D visas. For more details on this rule, check the US Government webpage [here](#).

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## Testing Times: More than just a stick up the nose

Chris Shieff  
3 February, 2021



In the last few weeks, several major countries have announced that **pre-departure Covid testing** of all international passengers is now compulsory. And it is up to the operators to make sure that this happens.

It is now mandatory for anyone travelling to **the UK, Australia and Canada** from anywhere. **The US** will follow suit from January 26.

Covid testing is set to become a common part of our aviation landscape for the foreseeable future. Until a vaccine has had time to work, people will need to be tested to move around the world freely.

### **But what type of Covid test do I need?**

Just google 'Covid test' and **prepare for confusion**. There are **different types of test** out there, and to make matters worse, there are **multiple confusing names for the same test**. Ask a passenger and the chances are that many will not understand why a rapid test at the airport isn't enough to board their flight.

So here is a super basic breakdown of the types of tests out there and how they work...

### **Covid Test 101**

Covid tests can do two things:

1. They can tell you've had it in the past by looking at your blood (**Antibody test**), or -
2. They can detect if you actively have the virus by looking at your mucus or saliva (**Diagnostic test**).

**Antibody tests** = Cannot tell if you are actively sick and contagious. So for travel, they are pretty much useless.

**Diagnostic tests** = There are a bunch of highly technical names floating around out there but the good news is that there are only a couple of types - **Molecular tests (PCR)** and **Antigen Tests**. (The bad news is you're getting a stick up the nose either way.)

- **Molecular tests (PCR)**. The gold standard in testing. These tests are super accurate and work by detecting the nucleic acid left behind by the virus. This is what most countries

require. The downside is the results take much longer and it is difficult to test a whole bunch of people quickly. There are home kits available but most of the time you'll need a lab to test you.

- **Antigen Tests.** When people say 'Rapid Test' this what they mean. These tests are quick, cheap and work by looking for a piece of coating on the virus. You still get swabbed but the results come back far quicker. They are what you see in airports. So what's the issue? They're not as accurate and can return false negatives. In most cases borders just won't accept them.

### **So what's the issue with antibody tests?**

All they do is look for anti-bodies in your blood and your body has to build up those defences. It can take up to 14 days after you first catch the virus before they can be detected. You can be sick and contagious before the test will even detect them. To make matters worse there is no evidence you can't catch Covid again even if you have already had it. So what's the point of them? They help authorities work out just how far the virus has gone out there.

### **Moving Forward...**

With rapidly changing testing rules around the world it will become super important to make sure you and your passengers get **the right kind of test**. Most of the time the one you will need is a **PCR test**. Rapid testing at airports is convenient and looks the same but in most cases just won't cut the mustard.