US no longer limiting international arrivals to 15 airports

David Mumford
15 September, 2020



From September 14, the US **is no longer limiting international arrivals from higher risk countries to specific airports.** Under previous rules, any passenger from China, Iran, the Schengen area of Europe, the UK, Ireland and Brazil had to enter the United States through one of **fifteen centralised airports** capable of providing enhanced health screening. **This is no longer be the case.**

The previous system was deemed ineffective because so many people who transmit the disease don't show symptoms. A new approach is being launched, which authorities say will better mitigate the risk of Coronavirus by focusing more on the individual passenger. **Here's how it will work:**

- Pre-departure, in-flight and post-arrival health education for passengers.
- Robust illness response at airports.
- Voluntary collection of contact information from passengers using electronic means as proposed by some airlines to avoid long lines, crowding and delays associated with manual data collection.
- Potential testing to reduce the risk of travel-related transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 and movement of the virus from one location to another.
- Country-specific risk assessments to assist passengers in making informed decisions about travel-related risk.
- Enhancing training and education of partners in the transportation sector and at U.S. ports of entry to ensure recognition of illness and immediate notification to CDC.
- Post-arrival passenger recommendations for self-monitoring and precautions to protect others, with enhanced precautions, including staying home to the extent possible for 14 days for people arriving from high-risk destinations.

You can read the announcement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention here, and confirmation from US CBP here.

Although the 15-airports rule has gone away, all other US rules on inbound travel remain in place. The main one is this – **with specific exemptions, foreign nationals are not allowed to enter the US if they have been in any of the following countries within the past 14 days: the European Schengen area, the UK and Ireland, mainland China, Iran, and Brazil.** 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, check the US Government webpage here.