



## Pre-departure COVID-19 Molecular Testing for Air Travellers Frequently Asked Questions

### Q1. Will all air travellers flying to Canada be required to provide a negative COVID-19 test result?

**A1.** Effective midnight on January 7, 2021 (00:00 EST or 05:00 UCT), anyone flying to Canada from another country, unless meeting an exception, will be required to provide written or electronic documentation showing a negative result from a COVID-19 molecular test, either polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or reverse transcription loop-mediated isothermal amplification (RT-LAMP), conducted within 72 hours prior to their scheduled time of departure.

Without a negative COVID-19 PCR or RT-LAMP test result, travellers must be denied boarding onto their flight.

Traveller exceptions include:

- **Children who are four years of age or younger** on the date of the flight (i.e. not yet turned five years old);
- **Air crew member** or a person who seeks to enter Canada only to become such a crew member (e.g., deadheading);
- **Future member of a crew** who is re-entering Canada after having left to participate in mandatory training in relation to the operation of a conveyance and who is required by their employer to return to work as a member of a crew on a conveyance within the 14-day period that begins on the day on which they return to Canada;
- **A person/class of persons** who, in the opinion of the Chief Public Health Officer, has **skills critical to Canada's COVID-19 response**;
- **Transiting travellers** who will be remaining in the sterile transit area of a Canadian airport until they leave Canada; or
- **Emergency Personnel** (e.g., RCMP Inflight security officer)

### Q2. Where should air carriers refer travellers if they do not have negative PCR or RT-LAMP test? Can an individual apply for an exemption to the Canadian pre-departure testing requirements?

**A2.** Transport Canada recognizes that there is potential for delays or challenges for obtaining tests in some countries as we transition to this new requirement. Canadians abroad can find additional information at [travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca) or by contacting Canadian consular services. They can also contact their travel service provider.

There are only a limited number of exceptions where an individual is not required to show proof of a negative test, which are:

- Children who are four years of age or younger (i.e., children who are five on the day of their travel must have proof of a negative COVID-19 molecular test);

- Air crew members or a person who seeks to enter Canada only to become such a crew member;
- Transiting travellers (not entering Canada through a border entry point);
- Emergency, law enforcement or border personnel; and
- Specific individuals or groups identified by Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer or the Minister of Health.

In addition, in Schedule 1, there are certain destinations for which air carriers and travellers have been allowed an extraordinary temporary exemption by Transport Canada due to the absence or near absence of testing in those locations (e.g., Haiti). These countries/territories are listed in Schedule 1 of the Interim Order.

**Q3. Does the 72 hours relate to the scheduled departure time or the scheduled time arriving in Canada?**

**A3.** A COVID-19 molecular polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or reverse transcription loop-mediated isothermal amplification (RT-LAMP) test must have been conducted within 72 hours prior to the scheduled time of departure of a flight to Canada.

Where a flight is delayed or diverted due to unforeseen circumstances or circumstances outside the air carrier’s control, the air operator is permitted to use the originally scheduled departure time of the flight as the benchmark for the 72 hours.

**Q4. What happens if a traveller’s flight is delayed, and their test is no longer within 72 hours of the departure to Canada? Do they need to take another test?**

**A4.** Where a flight is delayed due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., weather, mechanical delays), the air carrier is permitted to use the originally scheduled departure time of the flight as the benchmark for the 72 hours.

**Q5. Is a RT-LAMP test and LAMP test considered to be the same?**

**A5.** For Canadian purposes, the RT-LAMP and LAMP are considered to be the same.

**Q6. Should air carriers use the time when the PCR or RT-LAMP test was conducted or when the test results were provided?**

**A6.** Air carriers are to use the time of when the specimen was collected. Therefore, the swab should be collected within 72 hours (3 days) prior to the scheduled flight departure, with the expectation that the results will come in the intervening period.

**Q7. What if the PCR or RT-LAMP test results do not indicate the exact time the test (swab) was taken?**

**A7.** If the PCR or RT-LAMP test results do not show the specific time when the test (swab) was taken, air carriers are to use the date on the test results, which should be 3 days (72 hours) prior to time of departure.

**Q8. Which COVID-19 tests are valid or acceptable? Is there a list of laboratories or testing facilities available? What elements should the proof presented by the traveller contain?**

**A8.** A negative COVID test result (PCR or RT-LAMP) must be presented as written or electronic proof by the traveller to the air operator prior to travelling to Canada. The test result must also include the following information:

- Traveller's name and date of birth;
- Name and civic address of the laboratory/clinic/facility that administered the test;
- The date on which the test was conducted;
- The method of test conducted (PCR or RT-LAMP); and
- The test result.

More information about laboratories will be available on [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus) in the coming days. In the meantime, information is available on [travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca) about local COVID-19 testing facilities for certain destinations. Travellers must ensure that the COVID test results include all the above-noted information.

At this time, travellers are encouraged to make best efforts to have their test performed at a reputable laboratory or testing facility (i.e. one recognized by the local government or accredited by a third party, such as a professional organization or international standards organization).

**Q9. Do the test results need to be in English or French? What if the traveller can only get their results in another language?**

**A9.** The Government of Canada is asking that travellers make best efforts to obtain their valid test results at a facility where these can be provided in English or French where possible. Although a negative test result (PCR or RT-LAMP) will be accepted by the air carrier for boarding a flight to Canada, it is important for the traveller to understand that not having their test results in one of Canada's two official languages may cause delays at the border port of entry.

**Q10. Can travellers still board a flight for Canada if they cannot obtain a COVID-19 PCR or RT-LAMP test in the country they are in? Is there another option in Canada when they land if they are not able to get a COVID-19 test abroad?**

**A10.** All international travellers must present a negative COVID-19 PCR or RT-LAMP test before boarding.

There are very limited exemptions to this testing requirement. One example is a temporary exception until January 21, 2020, for travellers coming from Haiti, as Haiti does not yet have PCR testing generally available.

The small number of travellers arriving in Canada without a negative PCR test will be subject to additional measures from federal Quarantine Officers. These travellers will typically have a choice between taking a PCR test upon arrival or being directed to a federal quarantine facility at the point of arrival.

Air operators should notify Transport Canada as soon as possible in the event they are planning flights from a Last Point of Departure at which PCR or RT-LAMP testing is unavailable or unfeasible within the 72-hour time frame. Transport Canada will work with air operators to allow for an additional 24 hours (i.e. total of 96 hours) in those cases.

**Q11. Will temperature checks of travellers still be required given the new testing requirement?**

**A11.** Yes. All existing health requirements, including health check questions, temperature screening and the wearing of non-medical masks or face coverings on board flights to Canada remain in place.

**Q12. Would proof of vaccination replace the test?**

**A12.** At this time, proof of vaccination will not replace a negative test result. While vaccination protects an individual from illness, further evidence is required to understand if a vaccinated person can still spread the virus and infect others around them.

**Q13. Will the Government of Canada be incorporating the requirement for a negative PCR or RT-LAMP test result into the ArriveCAN app?**

**A13.** Travellers to Canada must use the ArriveCAN app or website and provide accurate contact information along with their mandatory 14-day quarantine plan on or before entry. Transport Canada is continuing to work with the Public Health Agency of Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, and other government departments to explore opportunities to streamline the process by using electronic or digital submission.

**Q14. Where no PCR or RT-LAMP test is available, would a rapid antigen test or a Diffractive Phase Interferometry (DPI) test be acceptable?**

**A14.** The Canadian pre-departure testing requirements are for a molecular test method only (PCR or RT-LAMP). Air operators are advised to alert Transport Canada as soon as possible if they become aware of situations in which:

- A PCR or RT-LAMP test is not available in a certain country or last point of departure;

- Obtaining test result within 72 hours is not feasible on a recurring basis (i.e. not individual case by case, but rather for certain last points of departures on an ongoing basis); or
- Where state, local or regional law prevents travellers from leaving a particular site to obtain a PCR or RT-LAMP test.

If such a situation occurs, air carriers are asked to contact the COVID-19 Testing Response Operational Team (C-TROT):

**FOR AIR CARRIERS ONLY**

MONDAY TO FRIDAY (0800 TO 1800 ET)

Contact Transport Canada (TC) by email at [TC.aviationsecurity-sureteaerienne.TC@tc.gc.ca](mailto:TC.aviationsecurity-sureteaerienne.TC@tc.gc.ca)

AFTER HOURS AND ON WEEK ENDS

Contact the Transport Canada Situation Centre (SITCEN) at Tel. 613.995.9737 or toll -free 1.888.857.4003 or [TC.SitcenHQ-CentredinterventionAC.TC@tc.gc.ca](mailto:TC.SitcenHQ-CentredinterventionAC.TC@tc.gc.ca)

**Q15. What will happen to travellers who arrive from countries/territories listed in Schedule 1, without a negative PCR or RT-LAMP test result?**

**A15.** Persons authorized to enter Canada and who are travelling from a country where PCR testing is unavailable will be required to have their quarantine plans reviewed by a designated Public Health Agency of Canada official and, if the plan is not suitable, the traveller will be required to quarantine in a federally designated quarantine facility for the mandatory 14 day quarantine.

**Q16. What will happen if a traveller falsifies a PCR or RT-LAMP test? Will there be penalties or fines?**

**A16.** Under Transport Canada's Interim Order, a person found to have made a false declaration may be subject to a fine of \$5,000. If an air operator suspects that a traveller has provided false or misleading information related to their PCR or RT-LAMP test results, they are required to notify Transport Canada immediately, with as much information as possible, so that an investigation can be conducted. Key information to provide should include: the data and flight number; the traveller's name and contact information (including date of birth, home address, telephone number and email address), and details on the circumstances related to the situation (what made the air carrier suspicious that the information was not accurate, any names of witnesses etc.).

**Q17. What will happen if an air carrier fails to check Canadian-bound travellers for a negative COVID-19 test (PCR or RT-LAMP)? Will there be penalties or fines?**

**A17.** Air carriers failing to comply with the requirements of the Interim Order or other regulatory requirements under the *Aeronautics Act* could be subject to a fine of up to \$25,000 per infraction.

**Q18. Do the PCR or RT-LAMP test provisions apply to all-cargo operators, private operators, taxi operations and domestic flights?**

**A18.** The requirements to verify that a traveller has a negative PCR or RT-LAMP test result applies to all commercial, charter, all-cargo and private air operators flying into Canada, unless the traveller is otherwise exempt (e.g., part of the flight crew). The requirement for a negative PCR or RT-LAMP test result does not apply to domestic flights.

**Q19. If a Canadian traveller is denied boarding, where should the air operator refer them to for consular services?**

**A19.** The Government of Canada provides consular service to Canadians abroad. Information about Canada's consular services is available on travel.gc.ca: [About Consular Services](#). Canadian government offices abroad do not provide medical attention (including administering COVID-19 testing) or cover medical expenses for Canadian citizens abroad.

Air operators should also 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.

**Q20. What happens if someone is coming to Canada through an indirect route? Will they need to show proof of testing at the start of their trip? If the 72 hours applies from the departure time of the flight to Canada, won't it be hard for some travellers to obtain their negative test in time?**

**A20.** A COVID-19 molecular polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test or a reverse transcription loop-mediated isothermal amplification (RT-LAMP) test must have been conducted within 72 hours prior to the scheduled departure of the direct flight to Canada from a last point of departure. The air carrier responsible for the flight to Canada is required under the Interim Order to ensure that the test was administered within this timeframe. Travellers are asked to plan their journey to Canada accordingly, and, in some cases, this may mean planning an intermediary stop at a destination for testing to ensure they can meet the Canadian requirements.

**Q21. Do transiting travellers need a PCR or RT-LAMP test if they are staying within the sterile area of a Canadian airport and not entering Canada through the border entry point?**

**A21.** All travellers entering Canada through a border entry point will require a PCR or RT-LAMP test prior to boarding their flight, regardless of whether or not they are staying in Canada. However, transiting travellers who will be remaining in the sterile transit area of a Canadian airport and will not be entering through a border entry point, will not require a PCR or RT-LAMP test nor will they be required to submit contact and quarantine plan information through the ArriveCAN app or website.

**Q22. What if the transiting time is extended due to delays and a traveller who was expected to stay within the sterile now requires an overnight transit?**

**A.22** Under this scenario, the traveller would be required to enter Canada and therefore would need to provide evidence of a negative result of a PCR or RT-LAMP test. Travellers without a negative COVID-19 test will be referred to the Public Health Agency of Canada.

**Q23. Does a negative PCR or RT-LAMP test reduce or eliminate the requirement to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival to Canada?**

**A23.** No. Travellers to Canada must use the ArriveCAN app or website and provide accurate contact information as well as their mandatory 14-day quarantine plan on or before entry. All travellers entering Canada must quarantine for the mandatory 14 day quarantine period.

**Q24. Who can air operators contact for support?**

**A24.** Air operators can contact Transport Canada at the following email address: [TC.aviationsecurity-sureteaerienne.TC@tc.gc.ca](mailto:TC.aviationsecurity-sureteaerienne.TC@tc.gc.ca). If the question is of an urgent or time sensitive nature, air operators should contact the Transport Canada Situation Centre (Monday to Friday 0800 to 1800 ET).

Transport Canada will not address individual traveller cases as they are deemed to be consular issues. If air operators request resolution of individual traveller cases, Transport Canada will redirect them to contact Global Affairs Canada.

**Q25. Is there a requirement for air operators to maintain records or to report on the PCR or RT-LAMP test verification?**

**A25.** There is currently no requirement for air operators to maintain records or to report on the PCR or RT-LAMP test; however, air operators are required to report to Transport Canada those travellers who have provided false or misleading PCR or RT-LAMP test information.

**Q26. What is the process for reporting those suspected of providing falsified or misleading test results to Transport Canada, as well as the expected functions for the Operations Coordination Team?**

**A26.** The process for reporting those suspected of providing falsified or misleading test results is the same as the process for reporting passengers not wearing face masks or unruly passengers, which is to report incidents to the Transport Canada Situation Centre. Information that will need to be provided include name of individual, flight number, etc.

**Q27. Does a traveller departing from a country that also requires PCR testing prior to entry need to be re-tested?**

**A27.** As long as the test was conducted within 72 hours of the traveller's scheduled departure time to Canada and was an acceptable test (PCR or RT-LAMP) which contained all the required information, the traveller will not need to be re-tested. If the test does not meet all of this criteria (noted below), the traveller must be re-tested.

Required test information:

- Traveller's name and date of birth;
- Name and civic address of the laboratory/clinic/facility that administered the test;
- The date on which the test was conducted (must be within 72 hours of scheduled departure time);
- The method of test conducted (PCR or RT-LAMP); and
- The test result.

Travellers are encouraged to make best efforts to have their test performed at a reputable laboratory or testing facility (i.e. one recognized by the local government or accredited by a third party, such as a professional organization or international standards organization). Travellers can find additional information about testing facilities at [travel.gc.ca](http://travel.gc.ca) and Canadian citizens or permanent residents can contact their Canadian consular services.

**Q28. What is the requirement related to traveller/baggage reconciliation if travellers present themselves at boarding without the appropriate negative test result? Are there any exemptions for airports (e.g., FRA, LHR, HKG) where a bag could travel without the traveller (e.g. in low risk situations)? Could carriers use their discretion for these locations when required due to operational reasons?**

**A28.** In order to ensure the smoothest travel journey for travellers and as little operational disruption as possible for air carriers, it is strongly recommended, where operationally possible, that upon arrival at the airport, travellers present themselves to the check-in counter to provide their COVID-19 test result.

**Q29. Does a traveller who is departing and returning Canada within 72 hours need to provide two separate test results?**

**A29.** No. The traveller may use the same negative PCR or RT-LAMP test result completed in Canada before departure upon boarding on the return flight to Canada, so long as the test was conducted within the 72 hour timeframe.



**Q30. Will Transport Canada be providing a template letter for crew members?**

**A30.** Yes. Transport Canada has provided a template letter to air operators to use for crew members in the COVID-19 Air Operator Guidance Material that can be found at <https://tc.canada.ca/en/initiatives/covid-19-measures-updates-guidance-issued-transport-canada/covid-19-measures-updates-guidance-aviation-issued-transport-canada#toc2-1>

**Q31. Will a test result that indicates “not detected” be accepted as evidence of a negative molecular COVID-19 result?**

**A31.** Yes, “not detected” can be accepted as equivalent to “negative” when providing evidence of a negative molecular COVID-19 test result.

**Q32. Is a COVID-SARS-02 molecular test result the same as a COVID-19 molecular test result?**

**A32.** Yes, these are considered equivalent. SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19.