



Alerts

Employer FAQs: Biden Administration Announces Plans to Replace COVID-19 Travel Bans With Vaccination and Testing Requirements

September 23, 2021

Insights for Employers

On September 20, 2021, the White House announced that beginning in early November, the current COVID-19 related restrictions on international travelers entering the United States from certain geographic regions will be replaced with vaccination and testing requirements. The current geographic restrictions apply to individuals from China, Iran, the Schengen Area, United Kingdom, Ireland, Brazil, South Africa, and India. These restrictions will be replaced with vaccination requirements for certain travelers and a requirement that all international travelers, including U.S. citizens, provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test within three days of boarding a flight to the United States.

To assist employers and business travelers, the following is a Q & A that draws on information that has been provided by the Biden Administration.

Q: What vaccines will be accepted to allow international travelers to enter the U.S.?

A: A list of approved vaccines has not been issued yet, but that information will be provided by the CDC in coming days.

Q: When will the new testing and vaccine requirements replace the geographic restrictions?

A: The new restrictions will go into effect in early November, although an exact date has not yet been announced.

Q: Will the current requirement to show proof of a negative COVID test remain in place for international travelers?

A: Yes, the current requirement for everyone to show proof of a negative test taken within three days of boarding a flight will remain in place, even for all fully vaccinated travelers.

Q: Can an American who is not fully vaccinated travel internationally?

A: The CDC will continue to recommend against air travel by any unvaccinated American. Prior to boarding, all unvaccinated travelers returning to the United States will be required to show the following:

- Proof of a negative test result taken within **one** day prior to departure
- Proof that they have purchased a viral test to be taken after arrival

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Q: Is the Biden Administration planning to end Title 19 restrictions on non-essential travel at the land border?

A: Title 19 is being extended for another month through October 21, and the Biden Administration has not provided any further updates at this time.

Q: What is being done to step up mitigation at the land border, if anything?

A: Currently, the Administration is announcing a move to a safer and more harmonized global approach to international inbound air travel, and their focus is on implementing those changes. The Administration did not provide any further updates on the land border policy.

Q: What exceptions will apply to the full vaccination requirement for foreign nationals?

A: The exceptions will be very narrow, limited to individuals such as children, COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial participants, and humanitarian exceptions for people traveling for critical reasons and who lack access to vaccinations. Additionally, the administration will require that individuals who do receive these exceptions agree to get vaccinated upon arrival.

Q: What additional mitigation steps will the administration be taking?

A: The administration has extended the masking order through January 18, 2022. Additionally, the CDC will announce new pre-departure and post-arrival testing requirements and will put in place a contact tracing order.

Q: When will the policies be finalized and made public?

A: The administration anticipates these policies will be effective by early November, with further announcements expected in the near future.