

Negative COVID-19 Test Required For International Travel To Canada



The novel COVID-19 pandemic first began impacting parts of Canada in March of 2020. With a vaccine to the deadly virus being rolled out throughout Canada, many had hoped that this was the light at the end of the tunnel we have been waiting for the past nine months.

Instead, as cases continue to rise and new strains of the vaccine are announced, Dominic LeBlanc, the Intergovernmental Affairs Minister announced on Wednesday, December 30, 2020 that further measures would be implemented for international travelers arriving by air. Specifically, Minister LeBlanc announced that **all** incoming international travelers would be required to present a “negative polymerase chain reaction (“PCR”) test within a 72-hour period prior to bordering a plane.”

Does this requirement apply to Canadians as well?

Minister LeBlanc’s comments specifically noted that all incoming travelers would be required to test negative within the 72-hour period prior to travel without making exceptions for Canadian Citizens; or Permanent Residents; or based on the duration of the travel outside of Canada. Because no exceptions have been made, this new rule will apply to all travelers, travelling for any purpose.

If I test negative, do I still have to self-isolate for 14 days once I return to Canada?

Individuals entering Canada will continue to be required to self-isolate for 14-days even if a negative PCR test is obtained prior to travel. In his statement, Minister LeBlanc outlined that the negative PCR test was not an alternative to the mandatory self-isolation upon entry to Canada, rather that the required negative test was an additional layer in protecting Canadian Citizens and Residents from the virus. Additionally, those who qualify for Alberta’s Rapid Test Pilot can still participate in that program.

When will this new rule be implemented?

At this time, no specific date has been set for this new rule to take effect, but reports indicate that it is expected to take effect in early January 2021. Visit the MLT Aikins COVID-19 Resource Center for the most up to date

information on the implementation of the new rule as well as all breaking and current COVID-19 news.

How will this new rule be implemented?

The federal government continues to encourage that any and all non-essential travel be avoided at this time. In addition, the Canada Border Services Agency (“**CBSA**”) will be increasing personnel at airports throughout Canada to reinforce compliance messaging, ensure travelers are aware of their self-isolation and COVID-19 precaution obligations once in Canada.

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