



COVID-19: Guidance Material for Air Operators

Managing Air Travellers for Flights Departing from an Aerodrome in Canada

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for air operators regarding the implementation of requirements included in the [Interim Order Respecting Certain Requirements for Civil Aviation Due to COVID-19, No. 34](#) (the *Interim Order*).

Overview

This guidance material, dated July 16, 2021, replaces the July 5, 2021 version. The only update that was made since the previous version was to make the link to *Interim Order No. 34*.

Recommended Sequencing for Air Operators

1. Notification and Confirmation Process

Transport Canada recommends this be conducted during the online or in-person check-in process (See [Annex A1](#) and [Annex A2](#) for pre-board messages). To reduce the situation where passengers are denied boarding, Transport Canada is recommending that air operators publish on their websites early notifications to remind and alert those considering flying what they can expect on their journey as per the requirements below. Notifications on websites should also advise travellers that they will require a medical certificate if they are exhibiting COVID like symptoms, an elevated temperature or are unable to wear a face mask due to a medical condition.

Note: all domestic requirements remain in place at this time, even for travellers that are fully vaccinated.

AIR OPERATORS must notify every passenger:

- They may not be permitted to board if:
 - they are exhibiting: (1) a fever and cough; or (2) a fever and difficulty breathing; and do not have a medical certificate certifying these symptoms are not related to COVID-19;
 - they have, or have any reason to suspect they have, COVID 19.
 - they have not been permitted to board an aircraft in the previous 14 days for medical reasons related to COVID-19; or

Caveat: The content of this guidance document does not supersede any requirement or obligation outlined in the *Interim Order*. It is meant to provide recommendations and guidance on how to understand and carry out the requirements.

- they are the subject of a mandatory quarantine order as a result of having recently travelled or because of a local or provincial health order.

Note: Passengers must be notified that if they knowingly provide any false or misleading information about their health they may be subject to a monetary penalty of up to \$5,000.

- They may be subject to a measure taken by the federal, provincial or territorial government at the destination airport for that flight in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. A summary of the provincial/territorial restrictions can be found in [Annex B](#).

Note: In situations where a traveller is under a quarantine order, they may still be permitted to travel based on the specific provisions of the order, providing they are symptom-free and pass the temperature screening and health check. For further information on the federally mandated quarantine provisions, please refer to the [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Quarantine, Isolation and Other Obligations\)](#) Emergency Order. For more information on the specific provincial and territorial measures in place, please refer to [Annex B](#) (Provincial/Territorial Restrictions).

- They must be in possession of a face mask (see [Annex C](#) for a description of an acceptable face mask) prior to boarding and must wear the face mask throughout their entire travel journey (unless they provide a medical certificate certifying that they are unable to wear a face mask for medical reasons). This includes wearing the face mask at airport screening checkpoints, during the boarding process, during the flight, and upon landing and disembarking at a Canadian airport (even if they are from the same household). They must also comply with any instructions given by a gate agent, aerodrome security personnel or crew member with respect to wearing the face mask.

Note: Some exceptions apply when the person could be endangered by wearing a face mask, when they are briefly eating, drinking or taking oral medications, when the gate agent or crew member authorizes the removal of a face mask to address unforeseen circumstances or special needs or when a gate agent, aerodrome security personnel or a crew member authorizes the removal of the face mask for identity verification.

- They must undergo temperature screening which will occur prior to entering the restricted area. If it indicates a fever (38 °C and above), they will be denied access to the restricted area (and therefore boarding) for a period of 14 days, unless the person can provide a medical certificate certifying that the fever is not related to COVID-19. This applies if they are departing from the air terminal building of one of the airports listed in Schedule 2 (YYC, YEG, YHZ, YLW, YUL, YOW, YQB, YQR, YXE, YYT, YTZ, YYZ, YVR, YYJ, and YWG) of the *Interim Order*.

PASSENGERS must confirm to the AIR OPERATOR that:



- They: (1) do not have or suspect they have COVID 19; (2) have not been denied boarding in the previous 14 days by an air operator due to a medical reason related to COVID 19; and (3) are not subject to a mandatory quarantine order as a result of recent travel or from a local/provincial health order that does **not permit them to travel**. This is now done in a single confirmation.

Note: a competent adult may provide this confirmation on behalf of another adult who may require assistance (in a situation where it is required).

- They are in possession of a face mask (or have a medical certificate stating a reason why they cannot wear a mask).
- They understand that they may be subject to a provincial, territorial, or federal government measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when travelling within Canada.

Note: In situations where an asymptomatic traveler is subject to a quarantine order, the air carrier should check with them for their particular circumstances to confirm whether air travel is permitted (e.g. entry into Canada by air - a valid negative PCR test would allow the journey to continue). However, the onus is on the travelers to demonstrate that they can travel under these circumstances. In addition, note that some jurisdictions may also allow individuals to depart as long as they are asymptomatic. For further information on the federally mandated quarantine provisions, please refer to the [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Quarantine, Isolation and Other Obligations\)](#) Emergency Order. For more information on the specific provincial and territorial measures in place, please refer to [Annex B \(Provincial/Territorial Restrictions\)](#).

- They understand that they may be refused boarding of an aircraft leaving a Canadian airport for a period of 14 days if they are found to have an elevated temperature, unless they provide a medical certificate certifying that the elevated temperature is not related to COVID-19 (if departing from the air terminal building of one of the airports listed in Schedule 2 (YYC, YUL, YYZ, YVR, YEG, YHZ, YLW, YOW, YQB, YQR, YXE, YYT, YTZ, YYJ and YWG) of the *Interim Order*).

Boarding of Travellers for onward domestic travel - changing quarantine locations

In some cases, individuals that have entered Canada after having travelled internationally, and have begun their quarantine at a government approved accommodation (unless they meet the definition of fully vaccinated noted below) and received a negative COVID-19 test result based on their arrival test, **are permitted to travel onward in Canada** (by any means of public transit, **including air**) to their final place of quarantine, following all local health protocols while in transit (e.g., wearing a mask). The provision for the change of place of quarantine is outlined in the [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Quarantine, Isolation and Other Obligations\)](#) Emergency Order. As always, these individuals, like all travellers, need to be asymptomatic and must still pass the health check in order to board the aircraft.



Note on fully vaccinated travellers

Fully vaccinated travellers, meeting the definition noted below, who have come from an international location and who are connecting domestically will either be subjected to an on-arrival test at the airport of their first point of entry, or will be given a take-away on-arrival test. They will be able to travel onward domestically, and must follow all public health measures. If these travellers meet the definition of fully vaccinated, they will not be subject to the federal requirement to quarantine or take a COVID-19 test on day-8. In addition, fully vaccinated travellers arriving by air will not be required to stay at a government-authorized hotel.

To be considered fully vaccinated, travellers must:

- be eligible to enter Canada
- have received the full series of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine or a combination of accepted vaccines
- have received your last dose at least 14 days prior to the day you enter Canada
 - Example: if your last dose was anytime on Thursday July 1st, then Thursday July 15th would be the first day that you meet the 14 day condition
- upload your proof of vaccination in ArriveCAN

For more information please visit: <https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/covid-vaccinated-travellers-entering-canada#determine-fully>

2. Directing Passengers for Retrieval of Baggage

If notified by the screening authority that a passenger cannot enter the restricted area (due to an elevated temperature) at one of the airports listed in Schedule 2 of the *Interim Order* (YYC, YUL, YYZ, YVR, YEG, YHZ, YLW, YOW, YQB, YQR, YXE, YYT, YTZ, YYJ and YWG) e AIR OPERATORS must ensure:

- 1) The passenger is directed to a location where they can retrieve their checked baggage, if applicable;
- 2) The escort, if one is provided, to take the passenger to a location to retrieve their checked baggage, wears a face mask. Note: additional Personal Protective Equipment may be required as determined by local workplace health and safety standards; and
- 3) The screening authority at the aerodrome has been provided with the name and phone number of the on-duty representative of the air carrier for the purpose of facilitating the return of checked baggage for persons who have been denied access to the restricted area as a result of having an elevated temperature.

3. Boarding Process

General Process:

During the identity verification process, and as part of the visual observation that a passenger has an appropriate face mask, passengers must be reminded to cover their mouth and nose before going up to the boarding gate counter. After handing over their identity documents and tickets to the air



operator representative, a passenger should be asked to step back an appropriate distance, and pull down their face mask to briefly uncover their face (using the ties/elastics) in order to complete the identity verification. After the identity verification is complete, the passenger can then re-cover their mouth and nose before collecting their documents from the air operator representative. Air operators should also consider pre-boarding passengers who are unable to wear a face mask and making special seating arrangements (e.g., infants and younger children seated next to the window, away from the aisle).

Requirements for AIR OPERATORS:

- Ensure gate agents and crew members are wearing a face mask. An exception to the wearing of a face mask applies when the safety of the gate agent or crew member could be endangered by wearing one, when it could interfere with the operational requirements or the safety of the flight or when they are eating, drinking or taking oral medications.
- Observe whether passengers boarding the flight exhibit COVID-19 symptoms and deny boarding to those who exhibit a fever and a cough or a fever and difficulty breathing unless they have a medical certificate identifying the symptoms are unrelated to COVID-19.
- Verify that every passenger boarding the flight is wearing a face mask, and deny boarding to those who don't, with the exclusion of the following: an infant less than 2 years old (note that it is recommended for children ages 2 to 5 years old but not mandatory), a person who provides a medical certificate certifying that they are unable to wear a face mask for medical reasons (see [Conditions Preventing the Wearing of Face Masks or Face Coverings](#) for an example medical certificate), a person who is unconscious, or a person who is unable to remove their face mask without assistance. Some exceptions apply when the person could be endangered by wearing a face mask, when they are eating, drinking or taking oral medications, when the gate agent or crew member authorizes the removal of a face mask to address unforeseen circumstances or special needs or when a gate agent, aerodrome security personnel or a crew member authorizes the removal of a face mask for identity verification.

4. Denial of boarding

In the event that the air operator observes that the air traveller has COVID-19 symptoms the air operator will be required to refuse to board the person for travel for a period of 14 days or until a medical certificate is presented that confirms that the symptoms that the person is exhibiting are not related to the COVID-19 virus.

- Unless a medical certificate is provided, the air operator is also required to deny boarding if the air traveller:
 - refuses to answer questions on the health check;
 - does not have a removable face mask in their possession (see [Annex C](#) for guidance on face mask); or



- refuses to comply with an instruction given by a crew member or gate agent with respect to wearing a face mask.
- The air traveller may also be denied access to the restricted area, by the screening authority, due to an elevated temperature which means that the person would not be able to board their flight.

Note: travellers who are under a quarantine order are NOT to be denied boarding in the case where the order has provisions allowing for them to travel, and they meet all other requirements (e.g., are symptom-free and pass the temperature screening and health check). For further information on the federally mandated quarantine provisions, please refer to the [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Quarantine, Isolation and Other Obligations\)](#) Emergency Order. For more information on the specific provincial and territorial measures in place, please refer to [Annex B](#) (Provincial/Territorial Restrictions).

If a denial of boarding situation occurs, the AIR OPERATOR should follow these steps:

- **Provide explanation for future travel** – Air operators will explain to air travellers who are denied boarding, based on the health check, observation of symptoms or elevated temperature, that they will need to wait 14 days before they are able to fly or that they will need to provide a medical certificate indicating the symptoms that they are exhibiting are not related to the COVID-19 virus.
- **Advise air travellers to follow local health authorities related to COVID-19** – Air operators should advise air travellers who have been denied boarding, due to indicating or exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, to follow the guidance/direction from their provincial/territorial health authorities for dealing with the COVID-19 infection.

5. In-flight – To be conducted as appropriate and in accordance with the *Interim Order*:

- AIR OPERATORS require crew members and passengers to wear a face mask during the flight. An exclusion applies to some persons when they are on the flight deck (e.g. pilots, flight engineers or flight attendants, TC inspectors, a person providing service who has expertise related to the aircraft). An exception also applies when the safety of the crew member or passenger could be endangered by wearing a face mask, when it could interfere with operational requirements or the safety of the flight, or when they are eating, drinking or taking oral medications.

Note about eating and drinking: Under normal circumstances where an exceptional case does not exist, it would be expected that when a passenger is drinking or eating food they remove their mask and make every effort to finish drinking their drink or eating their food within a period of no longer than 15 minutes. This is for the passenger’s own safety as well as those around them. While multiple layers have been put in place to make air travel as safe as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, taking every precaution is essential. That being said, encouraging passengers to have their masks removed for no longer than 15 minutes, which is defined by the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) as the threshold for “prolonged exposure”, will help reduce the risk of transmission of droplets. Air carriers are encouraged to use this



guideline when enforcing this provision, however it is acknowledged that there will be exceptional circumstances that will require some flexibility. It is also suggested that prior to serving any food or drinks in-flight that passengers be reminded that they are only allowed to remove their mask for a brief period (which could mean 15 minutes or less) to finish drinking or eating, that they must keep their mask on while waiting for any food or drink, and that a crew member will ask them to put their mask back on if they feel a “brief” timeframe has been exceeded. Failure to comply could result in a fine for the passenger.

In addition, the following exclusions apply: an infant less than 2 years old, a person who provides a medical certificate certifying that they are unable to wear a face mask for medical reasons, a person who is unconscious, and a person who is unable to remove their face mask without assistance.

- If, during a flight, a passenger refuses to comply with an instruction given by a crew member with respect to wearing a face mask, the AIR OPERATOR must keep a record of the following information for a period of 12 months, and inform the Minister, as soon as feasible (generally expected within 24-28 hours after the incident or sooner), of this record:
 - the date and flight number;
 - the passenger’s name and contact information, including the person’s date of birth, home address, telephone number and email address;
 - the passenger’s seat number on the flight; and
 - the circumstances related to this refusal to comply.

Note: These records must be made available to the Minister upon request, not just immediately following the incident.

Ensuring this information related to the incident is as complete and accurate as possible will be essential in facilitating Transport Canada’s ability to conduct a suitable investigation. Having the support and assistance of air operators in the process will be key to ensuring that there is sufficient evidence to take enforcement action, if required.

Note: Air carriers are not expected to update their systems if the information that is provided does not match; however, every effort to ensure all relevant information is relayed to Transport Canada in a timely manner is appreciated.

6. Deplaning process (Domestic flights only) – to be conducted upon landing:

- AIR OPERATORS advise passengers that they are required to wear a face mask during the deplaning process. While there is no requirement from Transport Canada to wear a face mask while deplaning at a location outside of Canada, please note that the department strongly recommends this practice, in accordance with ICAO CART recommendations (<https://www.icao.int/covid/cart/Pages/default.aspx>).



Denied boarding due to COVID-19 symptoms?

- Leave the airport and go immediately to a place where you can **self-isolate for 14-days**, and **use private transportation, where possible**, such as a personal vehicle to get there.
- Practice **physical distancing** at all times
- Practice **frequent hygiene, including proper hand washing** and **coughing and sneezing into your elbow or a tissue**
- Wear a face mask over your mouth, nose and chin at all times to protect others
- Get more information at: www.canada.ca/coronavirus

Available COVID-19 Resources:

Government of Canada: 1-833-784-4397 or visit www.canada.ca/coronavirus

Provincial and territorial:

Alberta: 811	British Columbia: 811	Manitoba: 1-888-315-9257
New Brunswick: 811	Newfoundland and Labrador: 811 or 1-888-709-2929	Northwest Territories: 911
Nova Scotia: 811	Nunavut: 1-888-975-8601	Ontario: 1-866-797-0000
Prince Edward Island: 811	Quebec: 1-877-644-4545	Saskatchewan: 811
Yukon: 811		



Annex A1: Pre-Board Notification to Domestic Passengers

The pre-board notification process can be done at automated check-in kiosks, by agents at the check-in counter, or any other means, at the discretion of the air operator; however, it is recommended that the passenger be made aware of the requirement to have a face mask in their possession prior to arriving at the airport.

PRE-BOARD NOTIFICATION TO DOMESTIC PASSENGERS

The Government of Canada, along with provincial and territorial authorities, has put measures in place in order to manage the spread of COVID-19. Please note that all the following measures apply to travellers even if they are fully vaccinated.

Prior to boarding this flight, you will be required to undergo a health check and a temperature screening. Verification that you have a face mask to cover your mouth, nose and chin will also be conducted. Providing false or misleading answers could result in a maximum fine of \$5,000. The temperature screening process will be done using a device that measures the temperature on your forehead, which will require that it be exposed. Any scarf, head covering or hair in this area may need to be lifted temporarily so that a proper temperature reading can be taken.

The Government of Canada is requiring that all travellers have a removable face mask to cover their mouth, nose and chin to prevent the inadvertent spread of COVID-19. Travellers must wear their face mask at all times during the screening process and the boarding process, as well as during the flight, upon landing and when exiting the aircraft, or as directed to do so by a member of the aerodrome security personnel, a gate agent or crew member.

As a reminder, no person should board a flight when they are feeling ill as this could potentially put others at risk. Should symptoms such as a fever, cough or difficulty breathing develop while in flight, please notify a crew member immediately.

When arriving at your destination, you may be subject to further measures taken by the provincial or territorial government in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Please remember it is your responsibility to confirm potential restrictions regarding your final destination point.

Stay safe and be informed about COVID-19 measures from Canadian national, provincial and territorial health authorities that apply in the region where you are heading.



Annex A2: Pre-board notification to passengers departing Canada

The pre-board notification process can be done at automated check-in kiosks, by agents at the check-in counter, or any other means, at the discretion of the air operator; however, it is recommended that the passenger be made aware of the requirement to have a face mask in their possession prior to arriving at the airport.

PRE-BOARD NOTIFICATION TO PASSENGERS DEPARTING CANADA

The Government of Canada has put measures in place in order to manage the spread of COVID-19. Please note that all the following measures apply to all travellers, even if fully vaccinated.

Prior to boarding this flight, you will be required to undergo a health check and a temperature screening. Providing false or misleading answers could result in a maximum fine of \$5,000. The temperature screening process will be done using a device that measures the temperature on your forehead, which will require that it be exposed. Any scarf, head covering or hair in this area may need to be lifted temporarily so that a proper temperature reading can be taken.

The Government of Canada is requiring that all travellers have a removable face mask to cover their mouth, nose and chin to prevent the inadvertent spread of COVID-19. Travellers must wear their face mask at all times during the screening process and the boarding process, as well as during the flight, upon landing, and when exiting the aircraft, as directed to do so by a member of the aerodrome security personnel, a gate agent or crew member.

As a reminder, no person should board a flight when they are feeling ill as this could potentially put others at risk. Should symptoms such as a fever, cough or difficulty breathing develop while in flight, please notify a crew member immediately.



Annex A3: In-flight announcement for a Canadian Domestic Flight

In light of the global pandemic related to COVID-19, the Government of Canada, in cooperation with provincial/territorial public health authorities, has put in place important measures to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in Canada. Please note that all these measures apply to travellers even if they are fully vaccinated.

Please be advised that many provinces and territories are asking all travellers, with some exceptions for essential services, to undergo self-isolation periods of up to 14 days to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in Canada.

Travellers are reminded that they must use their face mask during their journey. Upon landing, passengers will be required to wear their face mask when gathering their belongings and leaving the aircraft, until they are outside the air terminal building.

Along with wearing a face mask and physical distancing, the Government of Canada strongly advises all travellers in Canada to use the free COVID Alert app to:

- *Be notified when they may have been exposed to COVID-19;*
- *Get advice on what to do next; and*
- *Tell nearby app users if you test positive for COVID-19, without sharing personal information.*

Stay safe and be informed about COVID-19 measures from Canadian national, provincial and territorial health authorities that apply in the region where you are heading.



Annex B: Provincial/Territorial Restrictions

Please note that provincial and territorial information changes on a frequent basis. It is recommended that the following provincial/territorial government websites be consulted to obtain the latest travel information:

Province/Territory	Provincial / Territorial Web link
Alberta	Travellers should consult Alberta COVID-19
British Columbia	Travellers should consult British Columbia COVID-19
Manitoba	Travellers should consult Manitoba COVID-19
New Brunswick	Travellers should consult New Brunswick COVID-19
Newfoundland and Labrador	Travellers should consult Newfoundland and Labrador COVID-19
Northwest Territories	Travellers should consult Northwest Territories COVID-19
Nova Scotia	Travellers should consult Nova Scotia COVID-19
Nunavut	Travellers should consult Nunavut COVID-19
Ontario	Travellers should consult Ontario COVID-19
Prince Edward Island	Travellers should consult Prince Edward Island COVID-19
Quebec	Travellers should consult Quebec COVID-19
Saskatchewan	Travellers should consult Saskatchewan COVID-19
Yukon	Travellers should consult Yukon COVID-19



Annex C: Face Masks

The Government of Canada requires that all travellers six years and older wear a face mask large enough to cover their mouth, nose and chin during their entire travel journey. It should be noted that fully vaccinated travellers are still required to wear a face mask. For more information on face masks, please consult: [Non-Medical Masks: About](#).

Travellers must confirm that they have in their possession the mandatory face mask as part of the registration or check-in process, otherwise they will be denied boarding.

Refusal to comply with the wearing of a face mask could result in a fine of \$5,000 for the traveller.

Safe Use of Removable Face Masks

Face masks SHOULD :	Face masks SHOULD NOT :
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be made of multiple layers¹ of tightly woven fabric such as cotton or linen• Be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the mouth, nose and chin without gaps• Fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops (masks covering a person's beard or secured around a headwear (e.g. turban) are also considered acceptable)²• Be made of breathable materials• Be comfortable and not require frequent adjustments• Be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty• Be stored in a clean paper or cloth bag until you put it on again	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be placed on children less than 2 years old• Be placed on anyone who's unable to remove it without assistance• Be placed on anyone with a medical certificate indicating they should not wear a mask• Be made of materials that easily fall apart, like tissues• Be shared with others• Impair vision or interfere with tasks• Be removed to talk to someone

Note: If you're hard of hearing or interact with people who use lip-reading to communicate, consider wearing a clear mask³.

The following outlines instances where there is an exception to the requirement to wear a face mask:

¹ There is no expectation to have travellers remove their face mask to verify that there is a specific number of layers beyond "multiple" layers (which means two or more layers). A visual verification is sufficient to assess whether the requirement appears to be met.

² Air operators can refer to the "[Accepted vs Not Accepted Face mask Poster](#)" for more information.

³ The rest of the face mask must still be made of tightly woven material such as cotton or linen and have a tight seal between the transparent material and rest of the face mask.



- If a traveller has a medical certificate indicating they are unable to wear a face mask (see [Conditions Preventing the Wearing of Face Masks or Face Coverings](#) for an example certificate).
- If the traveller is a child who is at least two years of age but less than six years of age (i.e., 2-5 years old) and is unable to tolerate wearing a face mask. In this case, the adult responsible for the child must still ensure that a face mask is made readily available to the child prior to boarding an aircraft for a flight and should still try to encourage the child to wear it.
Note: Children six and older **must** wear a face mask when travelling, unless their parent or guardian has a medical certificate certifying they are unable to wear one due to medical reasons.
- During the flight when the safety of the traveller could be endangered by wearing a face mask or for brief periods when the person is eating, drinking or taking oral medications.
Note: travellers should make every effort to finish their drink or eat their food within a period of no longer than 15 minutes. Air operators are encouraged to use this guideline, which is defined by the Public Health Agency of Canada as the threshold for “prolonged exposure”, when enforcing this provision, however, it is acknowledged that there will be exceptional circumstances that will require some flexibility. It is also suggested that prior to serving any food or drinks in-flight that travellers be reminded that they are only allowed to remove their face mask for a brief period (which could mean 15 minutes or less) to finish drinking or eating and that they must keep their face mask on while waiting for any food or drink. Should a crew member feel the “brief” timeframe has been exceeded, they will ask them traveller to put their face mask back on. Failure to comply could result in a fine for the traveller.
- When a person who is asked by an official of the air operator, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, Canada Border Services Agency officer, or a Canadian public health official to briefly remove their face mask at the security screening, boarding gate or customs controlled areas of the airport for identification purposes.

