

CORRESPONDENT'S ADVICE

INDIA

29 NOV 2021

International arrivals

The following information was received from our correspondent on 29 November:

QUOTE

Please find attached revised guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health & Family welfare (Govt. of India) for International passengers arriving from various destinations to India.

For International travellers arriving at seaports/land ports see page 3 in below document

UNQUOTE

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Dated the 28th November 2021

Government of India
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Guidelines for International Arrivals
(in supersession of all guidelines issued on the subject on and after 11th November 2021)

Introduction

The global trajectory of COVID-19 pandemic continues to decline with certain regional variations. The need to monitor the continuously changing nature of virus and evolution of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern (VOCs) must still remain in focus. The existing guidelines for international arrivals in India have been formulated taking a risk-based approach. The existing guidelines have been revised in view of reporting of a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 (B.1.1.529; named Omicron) which has been now classified as Variant of Concern by the World Health Organization.

Scope

This document provides protocols to be complied with international travellers as well those to be followed by airlines, points of entry (airports, seaports and land border) for risk profiling of passengers.

This Standard Operating Procedure shall be valid **w.e.f. 1st December 2021 (00.01 Hrs IST)** till further orders. Based on the risk assessment, this document shall be reviewed from time to time.

A.1. Planning for Travel

- i. All travellers should
 - a. Submit self-declaration form on the online Air Suvudha portal (<https://www.newdelhiairport.in/airsuvudha/apho-registration>) before the scheduled travel, including last 14 days travel details.
 - b. Upload a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR report*. This test should have been conducted within 72 hrs prior to undertaking the journey.
 - c. Each passenger shall also submit a declaration with respect to authenticity of the report and will be liable for criminal prosecution, if found otherwise.
- ii. They should also give an undertaking on the portal or otherwise to Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, through concerned airlines before they are allowed to undertake the journey that they would abide by the decision of the appropriate government authority to undergo home/institutional quarantine/ self-health monitoring, as warranted.
- iii. Continuing with the earlier approach, travellers from certain specified Countries (based on epidemiological situation of COVID-19 in those Countries) are identified for additional follow up. These include need for additional measures as detailed in para (xv) below. The listing of such specified Countries is a dynamic exercise based on evolving situation of COVID-19 across the world and will be made available on the websites of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, (mohfw.gov.in) and the link of the same will be available at website of Ministry of External Affairs and Air Suvudha Portal.

A.2. Before Boarding

- iv. Passengers originating or transiting from at-risk countries shall be informed by the airlines that they will undergo post arrival testing, quarantine if tested negative, stringent isolation protocols if tested positive etc. as mentioned in para (xv).

- v. Do's and Don'ts shall be provided along with ticket to the travellers by the airlines/agencies concerned.
- vi. Airlines to allow boarding by only those passengers who have filled in the Self Declaration Form on the Air Suvidha portal, uploaded the negative RT-PCR test report. ;
- vii. At the time of boarding the flight, only asymptomatic travellers will be allowed to board after thermal screening.
- viii. All passengers shall be advised to download Aarogya Setu app on their mobile devices.

A.3. During Travel

- ix. In-flight announcement about COVID-19 including precautionary measures to be followed shall be made at airports and in flights and during transit.
- x. During in-flight crew shall ensure that COVID appropriate behaviour is followed at all times.
- xi. If any passenger reports symptoms of COVID-19 during flight, he/she shall be isolated as per protocol.

A.4. On arrival

- xii. De-boarding should be done ensuring physical distancing.
- xiii. Thermal screening would be carried out in respect of all the passengers by the health officials present at the airport. The self-declaration form filled online shall be shown to the airport health staff.
- xiv. The passengers found to be symptomatic during screening shall be immediately isolated and taken to medical facility as per health protocol. If tested positive, their contacts shall be identified and managed as per laid down protocol[#].
- xv. Travellers from specified Countries at risk [as mentioned in para (iii) above] will follow the protocol as detailed below:
 - Submission of sample for post-arrival COVID-19 test* at the point of arrival (self-paid). Such travellers will be required to wait for their test results at the arrival airport before leaving or taking a connecting flight.
 - If tested negative they will follow, home quarantine for 7 days. Re-test on the 8th day of arrival in India* and if negative, further self-monitor of their health for next 7 days.
 - However, if such travellers are tested positive, their samples should be sent for genomic testing at INSACOG laboratory network.
 - They shall be managed at separate isolation facility and treated as per laid down standard protocol including contact tracing mentioned in para (xiv).
 - The contacts of such positive case should be kept under institutional quarantine or at home quarantine monitored strictly by the concerned State Government as per laid down protocol.
- xvi. Travellers from Countries excluding those Countries at risk, will be allowed to leave the airport and shall self-monitor their health for 14 days' post arrival. A sub-section (5% of the total flight passengers) shall undergo post-arrival testing at random at the airport on arrival.
 - a. The 5% of such travellers in each flight shall be identified by the concerned airlines (preferably from different countries).
 - b. Such travellers shall be escorted by the concerned airlines/MoCA to testing area on arrival.
 - c. The cost of testing of such travellers shall be borne by MoCA.

- d. Laboratories shall prioritize testing of samples from such travellers.
 - e. If such travellers are tested positive, they shall be managed as per laid down standard protocol and samples would further send for genomic testing.
- xvii. If travellers under home quarantine or self-health monitoring, develop signs and symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19 on re-testing, they will immediately self-isolate and report to their nearest health facility or call National helpline number (1075)/ State Helpline Number.

International travellers arriving at seaports/land ports

- xviii. International travellers arriving through seaports/land ports will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, except that facility for online registration is not available for such passengers currently.
- xix. Such travellers shall submit the self-declaration form to the concerned authorities of Government of India at seaports/land ports on arrival.

* Children under 5 years of age are exempted from both pre- and post-arrival testing. However, if found symptomatic for COVID-19 on arrival or during home quarantine period, they shall undergo testing and treated as per laid down protocol.

Contacts of the suspect case are the co-passengers seated in the same row, 3 rows in front and 3 rows behind along with identified Cabin Crew. Also, all the community contacts of those travellers who have tested positive (during home quarantine period) would be subjected to quarantine for 14 days and tested as per ICMR protocol.

List of Countries from where travellers would need to follow additional measures on arrival in India, including post-arrival testing (Countries at-risk)

(Updated as on 26th November 2021)

1. Countries in Europe including The United Kingdom
2. South Africa
3. Brazil
4. Bangladesh
5. Botswana
6. China
7. Mauritius
8. New Zealand
9. Zimbabwe
10. Singapore
11. Hong Kong
12. Israel