



Note No A009/21

Protocol Directorate of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office presents its compliments to all diplomatic missions, consulates and international organisations and has the honour to provide further details on COVID-19 measures taken by her Majesty's Government

On 11 January, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts) made a written statement to the House of Commons outlining the update to **International Travel restrictions**.

Her Majesty's Government recognises the important role that international travel has in supporting the global economy and the general wellbeing of the public, but both globally and domestically, we are seeing significant increases in levels of coronavirus, including the emergence of worrying new strains. It is therefore imperative that we ensure we are doing all we can to protect travel, reduce the risk of imported infections, including from new variants and reduce the strain on our NHS whilst national lockdown and vaccinations take effect.

We already have strong, but proportionate measures in place such as mandatory self-isolation, with travel corridors and test to release. However, Her Majesty's Government needs to take additional steps to add a further layer of protection to safeguard public health.

From 4am on 15 January, the UK will be introducing pre-departure testing requirements for all inbound passengers to England. All passengers arriving by ship, plane or train will have to take a test up to 3 days before departure and provide evidence of a negative result before travelling. If you are arriving in England before 4am on 18 January 2021, you are under no legal obligation to get a test before you

travel. You should not be denied boarding for failing to provide proof of a negative test result, and will not be fined on arrival into England.

We still encourage you to comply with this guidance and get a test if possible.

There is no specific exemption within the regulations for diplomatic/consular staff working in foreign diplomatic and consular missions in the UK or other individuals enjoying privileges and immunities (including the staff of international organisations). Her Majesty's Government expects you to comply with these requirements and to continue to support our efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19.

There will be a very restricted number of exemptions, including hauliers to allow the free flow of freight, and, in certain limited circumstances, a reasonable excuse for not complying with the requirement. For example, lack of testing infrastructure in the departure country. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-people-travelling-to-england>

Transport operators will be required to check that a passenger has proof of a negative test result before they board their flight, train or ferry, and may deny boarding where appropriate to reduce numbers of non-compliant individuals arriving in England. Border Force will also conduct further checks upon arrival.

Her Majesty's Government recognises the continued challenges that the pandemic poses for both individuals and your missions, consulates and organisations. Measures are likely to be in place until the end of the current lockdown, although a review will take place before the end of that period.

Her Majesty's Government would like to assure you that application of these regulations is done without prejudice to any immunity from jurisdiction or inviolability that an individual might enjoy otherwise than by the operation of the regulations.

More detailed information to support understanding and implementation of all of the current COVID related regulations will follow this Note Verbale and will be made available on our webpages at www.protocol.fco.gov.uk. Here you will also find further information on other aspects of the current Covid-19 related restrictions. In addition, diplomatic missions and International Organisations should continue to refer to the UK Government's guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> .

Protocol Directorate of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all diplomatic missions and international organisations the assurances of its highest consideration.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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