Directorate of health
Chief Epidemiologist for Iceland

Infection prevention measures following the repeal of border screening for COVID-19 for those fully vaccinated

Guidelines for institutions and companies involved in vital infrastructure operations

How to protect yourself against the COVID-19 Coronavirus

- Be mindful of hygiene. Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water and use hand sanitiser. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

- Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze, especially if you have cold like symptoms.

- Avoid close contact with individuals who are coughing or have cold/flu like symptoms.

- Be mindful of hygiene when you are using things such as public touchscreens, handrails, elevator buttons, card machines and doorknobs.

- Say hello with a smile rather than a handshake or a hug.

- Cook meat and eggs well.

- Avoid contact with stray animals in market areas.

Embætti landlæknis
Directorate of Health

14 July 2021

Contents

1. Reason and purpose of the guidelines

As of 1 July 2021, fully vaccinated passengers arriving in Iceland from at-risk areas are no longer screened for COVID-19 at the border. Those whose vaccination has not yet taken full effect are screened once on arrival. Those who have contracted COVID-19 can still enter the country without getting tested, although it is recommended that individuals with a history of COVID-19 be vaccinated.

Please note that the need for quarantine due to connection to cases is still assessed in each individual case, and vaccinated people may therefore need to go into a 7-day quarantine due to connection to cases. Individuals who are diagnosed with an active COVID-19 infection after vaccination go into isolation, and the rules for their isolation are no different from the isolation of unvaccinated people with COVID-19.

Vaccination is primarily a powerful protection against serious illness due to COVID-19, but only partially reduces the risk of infection if the infection is in the near vicinity. Therefore, it is possible that infection will occur among those vaccinated following the repeal of requirements for testing and quarantine after travel from at-risk areas. In that case, the infected will need to go into isolation, and family members, close colleagues and other close contacts might need to go into quarantine. Incidents of this kind in the health system or other infrastructure activities can be a threat to activities that the whole nation relies on running smoothly.

It is strongly recommended that institutions and companies that have been defined as providers of essential infrastructure services, such as healthcare institutions, energy and utilities, food producers, etc., and parties that provide services to at risk groups, such as the elderly, **continue to apply special infection control measures at their facilities** after travel by employees abroad, when specialists from abroad come to work or when guests/clients come to the workplace/institution soon after travelling from an at-risk area. Other companies and institutions are also permitted to use these guidelines.

It is strongly recommended that those who enter the country download the Rakning C-19 app to their phones and keep it active on their phones during their stay in Iceland. That can help with tracing an infection.

2. Guidance for employees and consulting professionals who have been in an at-risk area

1. Fully vaccinated with more than 2 weeks since the last dose: no testing, no quarantine on arrival.
2. Fully vaccinated but 2 weeks have not passed since full vaccination: one test on arrival, quarantine until the result is received.

a) Test on arrival is **positive.** The COVID outpatient ward at Landspítali will contact the individual in question, have them come in for further evaluation and put them in isolation. Following the outpatient ward's evaluation, a decision is made as to whether or not the individual is considered contagious (with a new COVID-19 infection) or not (a recent infection) and thus whether or not isolation continues.

3. Test on arrival is **negative.** The individual in question is free from all official infection prevention measures.

4. Unvaccinated/semi-vaccinated: test on arrival and after 5 days with **quarantine** in between. It is possible to apply for a work quarantine in urgent cases, but the individual in question may not start work until the result of the first test is negative, see rules and [guidelines on work quarantine](#).

Although the official requirement for testing and quarantine is according to items 1 and 2 above, further precautions are **recommended** with regards to the workplace.

- Measures that have been customary for quarantine C according to the rules of each institution/company may be used. For example, employees who return to work after travelling abroad might wear a face mask when working for approx. 7 days after arrival in Iceland and the institution/company performs or [facilitates testing](#) **even if the employee is asymptomatic** 5 days after arrival in the country.
- Symptom testing is still available free of charge through Heilsuvera or healthcare centres. An employee with symptoms should not work among vulnerable individuals during a pandemic, even if testing does not show a COVID-19 infection.
- If the workplace requests that the employee be completely absent from work until the second test / quarantine has otherwise been completed, the institution/company must examine who bears the cost of this measure when it is not at the request of the health authorities.

3. Guidelines for members of the general public who seek services from medical institutions / infrastructure companies

It is recommended to ask about travel history and symptoms of COVID-19 when an individual requests services if special rules on infection prevention apply within the institution. In the case of pre-booked appointments, it is appropriate to do so before the individual in question arrives at the institution/company. Posters can also be put up around entrances and/or the individual asked about their travel history and symptoms when they arrive for the service. Please note that precautions for COVID-19 should not delay emergency services.

4. Guidelines for visitors

- It is recommended that institutions set rules for visitations that ensure as much as possible that:
  - Direct contact between employees and visitors who may have recently travelled from an at-risk area is minimised.
  - There is no risk that visitors who have recently travelled from an at-risk area mix unnecessarily with other visitors, customers or clients who are not familiar with their travel history.

  This means that, in some cases visitors, may be asked **not** to visit certain institutions and companies within 7–14 days of arriving in the country from an at-risk area.

- It is recommended that individuals who are travelling from at-risk areas and are exempt from border testing and quarantine do **not** visit geriatric or medical institutions without prior consultation with the relevant institution and then possibly with special precautions such as the use of protective equipment.

5. Basic infection prevention

Basic infection prevention should always be observed towards everybody, irrespective of whether or not a person appears to be ill.

Basic infection prevention measures include:

- General hand cleaning, i.e. handwashing and/or use of hand sanitiser after coming into contact with a contaminated surface.
- Exercise caution when coughing or sneezing, and clean hands if hands may have been contaminated with droplets.
- Ensure easy access to disposable protective gloves or work gloves depending on the situation and the nature of the job. Clean hands after using gloves.
- Use clean equipment and clean utensils for each individual; disrupt the mode of transmission.
- Use disposable gloves, plastic aprons and disposable wipes when cleaning up blood, vomit or other bodily fluids. Place disposable equipment in a closed bag, which may then be thrown away with general rubbish.

6. Employee checklist

When a portion of the staff has been in an at-risk area within 7 to 14 days, all employees should:

- Strengthen infection control and apply basic infection prevention measures at all times.
- Know the symptoms of COVID-19 infection and the virus' mode of transmission.
  - **The main symptoms are:** Temperature >38°C, cough, shortness of breath, aches (head, muscles, bones) and weakness; some people experience mild cold symptoms, sore throat or notice changes in their sense of taste and smell.

- o **Mode of transmission:** Droplet-borne respiratory tract infections and contact infections if droplets have contaminated hands or surfaces touched by others.
- Familiarise yourself with and respect the rules that apply in the workplace for employees, clients, customers or guests who have recently stayed in an at-risk area.
- Notify the immediate supervisor if COVID-19 infection is suspected.
- Be prepared to treat a colleague, client or a visitor with COVID-19 symptoms with appropriate precautions. Further [details](#).

7. Responsibilities of employees who have stayed in at-risk areas

Employees who have stayed in an at-risk area but are exempt from formal screening and quarantine due to vaccination or who work in quarantine must monitor symptoms according to the following for at least 7 days:

- Temperature >38°C [Note! If quarantine takes place in the workplace, it is recommended that temperature is taken at least daily]
- Cold or sore throat, sudden change in sense of smell or taste
- Recent cough or shortness of breath
- Fatigue, muscle or bone pain, headache

If symptoms develop, take a break or go home if at work, inform the supervisor of symptoms and ask for symptom testing through Heilsuvera or a healthcare centre.

8. COVID-19 infection in the workplace

In case of a confirmed infection in an employee, a tracing process is initiated at the workplace by the tracing team. Hygiene rules that have been enforced in the workplace, such as separate bathrooms for those who have stayed in an [at-risk area](#); contact restrictions, such as group division of employees; and possible use of protective equipment, such as face masks, can reduce the risk of infection for other employees and clients or customers. The use of the tracing app can help assess who actually needs to quarantine in such situations.

Companies and institutions that carry out essential infrastructure activities have the opportunity to apply for a work quarantine despite connection to cases, but **the risk of a group infection that can have a significant effect on the activities increases in those circumstances.**

See [infection prevention and cleaning guidelines](#). The instructions are available in [more languages](#).