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FROM: Office of the Commissioner

Interim Guidance for Quarantine Restrictions on Travelers Arriving in New York State Following Out of State Travel

This updates the previously issued October 8, 2020 guidance for *Interim Guidance for Quarantine Restrictions on Travelers Arriving in New York State Following Out of State Travel*. Updates include:

- New testing and quarantine criteria for travelers to New York from non-contiguous states and other countries

Purpose

In response to increased rates of COVID-19 transmission in certain states and countries, and to protect New York's successful containment of COVID-19, New York State has issued a travel advisory for anyone coming to New York after travel to states that are not contiguous to New York, or after travel to any CDC Level 2 or Level 3 Travel Health Notice country.

Background

Under Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's leadership, New York State has successfully slowed the transmission of COVID-19 to a rate that is unprecedented within the country. New York contracted COVID-19 from Europe, with over 2.2 million travelers coming in between the end of January and March 16, 2020, when the federal government finally implemented a full European travel ban. During that period of time, 2.2 million travelers landed in the New York metropolitan area and entered our communities. This, combined with the density and crowding of our population, caused New York to have the highest infection rate in the country.

After more than 8 months of strict adherence to data-driven, evidence-based protocols, including required social distancing and mandatory face coverings, and after the closure of our economy, New Yorkers have successfully reduced the spread of COVID-19 to one of the lowest rates in the nation. Other states and nations have taken a more haphazard, less data-driven, less cautious approach, and are now experiencing a rapidly increasing rate of transmission of this deadly virus. Any non-essential travel continues to be strongly discouraged.

Quarantine Criteria for Travel

All travelers entering New York from a state that is not a contiguous state, or from a CDC Level 2 or 3 Travel Health Notice country, shall quarantine for a period of 14 days, consistent with Department of Health regulations for quarantine, **unless**:

1. For travelers who traveled outside of New York for more than 24 hours, such travelers must obtain testing within 72 hours prior to arrival in New York, AND
2. Such travelers must, upon arrival in New York, quarantine according to Department of Health guidelines, for a minimum of three days, measured from time of arrival, and on day 4 may seek a diagnostic test to exit quarantine.

For travelers that meet the criteria above, the traveler may exit quarantine upon receipt of the second negative test result.

Contiguous states are Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont. Travelers from these states are not subject to this guidance.

Travelers who leave New York State for less than 24 hours do not need to obtain a diagnostic test before departing and do not need to quarantine upon return. However, such travelers must fill out the traveler form upon entry and must obtain a diagnostic test on the fourth day after arrival in New York.

Guidance for Travel

All individuals coming into New York from either a non-contiguous state or US territory, or any CDC Level 2 or Level 3 Health Notice country, whether or not such person is a New York resident, are required to complete the traveler health form upon entering New York. Significant penalties will be imposed on any individual who fails to complete the traveler health form.

The travel advisory issued pursuant to Executive Order 205.2, requires all New Yorkers, as well as those visiting from out of state and out of country, to comply with the advisory in the best interest of public health and safety. However, the Department of Health retains the ability to enforce quarantine requirements and impose significant penalties for non-compliance, as such non-compliance can result in significant harm to public health. Primary enforcement is carried out through local departments of health. To file a report of an individual failing to adhere to the quarantine pursuant to the travel advisory, please call 1-833-789-0470 or visit this website: <https://mylicense.custhelp.com/app/ask>. Individuals may also contact their local department of health.

Quarantine Requirements

If you are coming to New York from travel to a non-contiguous state or designated country, and if such travel was for longer than 24 hours outlined above, you are required to quarantine pursuant to the below requirements until you test out or for the full 14 days, unless you are an essential worker traveling from a non-contiguous state, as identified below. The [requirements to safely quarantine](#) include:

- The individual must not be in public or otherwise leave the quarters that they have identified as suitable for their quarantine.
- The individual must be situated in separate quarters with a separate bathroom facility for each individual or family group. Access to a sink with soap, water, and paper towels is necessary. Cleaning supplies (e.g. household cleaning wipes, bleach) must be provided in any shared bathroom.
- The individual must have a way to self-quarantine from household members as soon as

fever or other symptoms develop, in a separate room(s) with a separate door. Given that an exposed person might become ill while sleeping, the exposed person must sleep in a separate bedroom from household members.

- Food must be delivered to the person's quarters.
- Quarters must have a supply of face masks for individuals to put on if they become symptomatic.
- Garbage must be bagged and left outside for routine pick up. Special handling is not required.
- A system for temperature and symptom monitoring must be implemented to provide assessment in-place for the quarantined persons in their separate quarters.
- Nearby medical facilities must be notified, if the individual begins to experience more than mild symptoms and may require medical assistance.
- The quarters must be secure against unauthorized access.

Travel Advisory Exceptions for First Responders and Essential Workers

Exceptions to the travel advisory are permitted for essential workers traveling from a non-contiguous state or Level 2 or Level 3 country and are limited based on the duration of time in New York.

Short Term – for first responders and essential workers traveling to New York State for a period of less than 12 hours.

- This includes instances such as an essential worker passing through New York, delivering goods, awaiting flight layovers, and other short duration activities.
- Essential workers must stay in their vehicle and/or limit personal exposure by avoiding public spaces as much as possible.
- Essential workers must monitor temperature and signs of symptoms, wear a face covering when in public, maintain social distance, and clean and disinfect workspaces.
- Essential workers are required, to the extent possible, to avoid extended periods in public, contact with strangers, and large congregate settings.

Medium Term – for first responders and essential workers traveling to New York State for a period of less than 36 hours, requiring them to stay overnight.

- This includes instances such as an essential worker delivering multiple goods in New York, awaiting longer flight layover, and other medium duration activities.
- Essential workers must monitor temperature and signs of symptoms, wear a face covering when in public, maintain social distance, and clean and disinfect workspaces.
- Essential workers are required, to the extent possible, to avoid extended periods in public, contact with strangers, and large congregate settings.

Long Term – for first responders and essential workers traveling to New York State for a period of greater than 36 hours, requiring them to stay several days.

- This includes instances such as an essential worker working on longer projects, fulfilling extended employment obligations, and other longer duration activities.
- Essential workers must seek diagnostic testing for COVID-19 on day 4 after arriving.

First responders and essential workers and their employers are expected to comply with

previously issued DOH [guidance](#) regarding return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the employee had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19. Additionally, this guidance may be superseded by more specific industry guidance for a particular industry (e.g., for nursing home and adult care facility staff, a negative PCR test result is required before returning to work). Teachers, school employees, and [child care workers](#) must quarantine for a minimum of 3 days after returning to New York from a designated state or country due to the nature of education and child care services and the risk and difficulty of adherence to the guidelines that govern such exemptions, and must be tested on day 4 after arriving, pursuant to EO 205.2. Although such workers are essential, the travel advisory exemption for essential workers does not apply to teachers, school employees, or child care workers, due to the sensitivity of these congregate settings.

Consult with your employer regarding whether there is any applicable industry-specific guidance that may apply to you.

Please consult the DOH [website](#) and resources for additional details and information regarding isolation procedures for when a person under quarantine is diagnosed with COVID-19 or develops symptoms.

For reference, except as stated above, an “essential worker” is (1) any individual employed by an entity included on the Empire State Development (ESD) [Essential Business list](#); or (2) any individual who meets the COVID-19 testing criteria, pursuant to their status as either an individual who is employed as a health care worker, first responder, or in any position within a nursing home, long-term care facility, or other congregate care setting, or an individual who is employed as an essential employee who directly interacts with the public while working, pursuant to DOH [Protocol for COVID-19 Testing, issued May 31, 2020](#), or (3) any other worker deemed such by the Commissioner of Health.

Medical Appointments or Procedures

If you have a health care procedure or appointment scheduled in New York that cannot be postponed, you (and your support person/companion) may travel to the extent necessary to maintain that appointment but must otherwise remain quarantined. For further information, see the Department’s [guidance](#) on this topic.

Additional Questions and Answers

How will my quarantine be enforced?

The NYS Department of Health expects all travelers to comply and protect public health by adhering to the quarantine. However, the NYS Department of Health and the local health departments reserve the right to issue a mandatory quarantine order, if needed. Pursuant to Executive Orders 205.1 and 205.2, anyone who violates a quarantine order may be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$10,000, or imprisonment up to 15 days per PHL 229.

If I am not an essential worker, can I travel to a non-contiguous for vacation or to see family?

Non-essential travel is strongly discouraged. Upon your return from any travel to a non-contiguous state, you will be required to quarantine when you enter New York, pursuant to the criteria above. In addition, pursuant to Executive Order 202.45, as extended, any New York State resident who voluntarily travels to a non-contiguous state for travel that was not taken as part of the person’s employment or at the

direction of the person's employer, will not be eligible benefits under New York's COVID-19 paid sick leave law.

Additional Travel Advisory Exemptions:

The Commissioner of Health may additionally grant an exemption to the travel advisory based upon extraordinary circumstances, which do not warrant quarantine, but may be subject to the terms and conditions applied to essential workers or terms and conditions otherwise imposed by the Commissioner in the interest of public health. Exemption requests should be sent to TravelAdvisoryExemption@health.ny.gov.

Resources

Travel restrictions will help to contain the rates of COVID-19 transmission in New York State and will work to protect others from serious illness. All New Yorkers must take these travel directives seriously. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. For further information, please visit:

- [DOH COVID-19 Website](#)
- [NYS Local Health Department Directory](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) COVID-19 Website](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\) COVID-19 Website](#)