

Alert | Health Emergency Preparedness Task Force: Coronavirus Disease 2019



July 2020

July 2020 Travel Advisory, U.S. Embassy/ Consular Services, and COVID-19 Movement Restrictions

As economies worldwide begin to re-open, some companies and individuals are thinking about resuming international travel. If international travel is required for your work or other reasons, be prepared for strict restrictions and potential last-minute cancellations. This updated GT Alert provides considerations with respect to international travel amid the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

1. President Trump's Executive Orders

On April 22, 2020, President Trump signed an executive order entitled *Proclamation Suspending Entry of Immigrants Who Present Risk to the U.S. Labor Market During the Economic Recovery Following the COVID-19 Outbreak*. This executive order is in effect until Dec. 31, 2020, and only affects the issuance of immigrant visas (green cards) at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad.

Furthermore, on June 24, 2020, executive order entitled *Proclamation Suspending Entry of Aliens Who Present a Risk to the U.S. Labor Market Following the Coronavirus Outbreak* went into effect. This executive order suspends the issuance of H-1B, L-1, H-2B, and J-1 visas, as well as the corresponding dependent visa categories. Unless extended, this executive order is also in effect until Dec. 31, 2020. Individuals may qualify for an exception if they can evidence that they are entering the United States to provide temporary labor or services essential to the U.S. food supply chain or their entry would be in the

national interest, among other reasons. Canadian nationals are exempt from this proclamation. For details, see our [Inside Business Immigration blog post](#).

Finally, depending on where an individual is coming from, they may also need to comply with the *Proclamation on Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting Novel Coronavirus*. Specifically, an individual, unless an exception applies, may not enter the United States if they were physically present in Brazil, the People's Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Schengen Area, the United Kingdom (excluding overseas territories outside of Europe), and the Republic of Ireland for a 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States. Individuals planning to re-enter the United States from one of these areas may either apply for a waiver or spend the 14-day quarantine period in a third country. However, individuals who decide to spend required quarantine periods in a third country may need visas to enter those countries, and other movement restrictions may apply, as outlined below.

2. Movement Restrictions Within the United States

New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut have issued a travel advisory for anyone travelling from states that have a significant degree of community-wide spread of COVID-19. As of July 1, 2020, these states include: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah, among others. Any individual coming into New York, New Jersey, or Connecticut from one of these states must self-quarantine for 14 days. Please refer to the [New York State Department of Health website](#) for the most comprehensive and up-to-date regional travel restrictions. Individuals who do not comply with self-quarantine requirements may be subject to steep fines.

In addition, municipalities are also starting to impose quarantine requirements for travelers from areas with high COVID-19 infection rates. For example, [Chicago will impose a mandatory 14-day quarantine period](#) for individuals who travel to Chicago from COVID-19 hot spots.

3. U.S. Embassies and Consulates Begin to Offer Limited Services Worldwide

U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide are resuming services on a limited basis. Although there is no official guidance from the Department of State, to get in queue, visa applicants should schedule their visa appointments as soon as calendars are opened, as there may be long processing and wait times due to case backlog. However, these visa appointments may be rescheduled by the embassy with little or no warning, as the COVID-19 situation remains fluid. In most cases, a visa appointment will be re-scheduled at no additional cost, with DS-160 forms remaining valid for one year.

Most embassies and consulates are granting emergency visa appointments if an applicant qualifies under one of the exceptions listed in the executive orders. Furthermore, if a waiver is necessary, the Department of State is the primary source for issuing such waivers. Waivers are typically issued for emergency situations or for individuals who are required to return to the United States for essential purposes. Exception and waiver requests are highly discretionary and are granted at the discretion of the consular officer at the visa appointment. If the exception or waiver is not granted, the applicant is not entitled to a refund of the visa appointment fee and must complete the DS-160 form again for any subsequent appointments.

Specific U.S. embassies/consulates are implementing the following:

- **Canada:** Routine visa services remain suspended until further notice. The embassy and consulates continue to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services as resources and local conditions allow.
- **France:** The U.S. Embassy in Paris opened its calendar, and as of the date of this GT Alert, applicants may schedule non-immigrant visa appointments beginning in August.
- **Italy:** Visa appointments remain suspended until further notice.
- **Sweden:** Routine visa services remain suspended until further notice. The embassy continues to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services as resources and local conditions allow.
- **Poland:** Routine visa services remain suspended until further notice. The embassy and consulate continue to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services as resources and local conditions allow.
- **Turkey:** Routine visa services remain suspended until further notice. The embassy and consulate continue to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services as resources and local conditions allow.
- **Israel:** Routine visa services remain suspended until further notice. The embassy and consulate continue to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services as resources and local conditions allow.
- **Mexico:** Non-immigrant visa applicants can schedule appointments beginning in July.
- **Argentina:** Non-immigrant visa applicants can schedule visa appointments beginning in August.
- **Brazil:** The embassy and consulates have cancelled all routine visa appointments but continue to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services as resources and local conditions allow. Non-immigrant visa applicants can schedule appointments beginning in September.
- **Chile:** Routine visa services remain suspended until further notice. The embassy and consulate continue to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services as resources and local conditions allow.
- **India:** The embassy and consulates have cancelled all routine visa appointments but continue to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services as resources and local conditions allow. U.S. visa application centers located at New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata, and the six document delivery centers located at Jalandhar/Chandigarh/Pune/Ahmedabad/Bangalore/Cochin will remain closed until further notice.
- **Japan:** The embassy and consulates have cancelled all routine visa appointments but continue to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services as resources and local conditions allow

4. EU Travel Restrictions

As of July 1, Europe is slowly reopening its borders. However, travelers coming from countries that have not contained COVID-19 will be barred. The list of banned countries includes the United States. [A complete list of banned countries, as well as enforcement provisions, can be found here.](#)

5. Country-Specific Entry Requirements and Movement Restrictions

As the COVID-19 situation remains fluid on a global scale, all international travelers should remain flexible with their travel plans. Current travel bans and restrictions notwithstanding, most nationals can return to their home countries. In some cases, a non-immigrant visa applicant may not be required to appear for a visa appointment in their home country. However, if it is decided that the applicant will travel to a third country (not their home country) to obtain a visa, consider that the country may be restricting foreigner entry. If allowed entry, the applicant may be required to self-quarantine for 14-30 days before being permitted to appear for a visa appointment. Also, depending on the visa applicant's nationality, the visa applicant may be required to obtain a visa to enter the third country. Following are country-specific entry requirements and movement restrictions.

- **Canada:** On June 16, the United States and Canada announced a mutual agreement to extend restrictions on non-essential travel through July 16. Land borders and ports of entry are operating at limited capacity, and are not accepting NAFTA visa applications. The Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada (USMCA) went into effect July 1; USMCA may further alter the NAFTA visa application process.
- **France:** As of June 15, French borders with other European Union member states are open. Travelers arriving in France must self-isolate for 14 days if they have no symptoms, or 30 days if displaying symptoms. Restrictions on entering France from outside the EU, including from the United States, remain in place until further notice. Anyone transiting through France to reach the U.S. must have a completed [attestation](#).
- **Italy:** On June 11, the Italian government issued a follow-up [decree](#) stating that individuals arriving in Italy from the European Union, Schengen, the United Kingdom, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, and the Vatican City State will no longer be required to self-isolate under the supervision of health authorities for 14 days unless they have stayed in other countries during the 14-day period prior to entering Italy. For individuals travelling from a country not listed above, including the United States, travel to Italy will be allowed only for proven work, urgent health needs, or to return to place of residence. Those travelers continue to be required to self-isolate for 14 days under the supervision of health authorities, either at home or at another address of their choosing.
- **Sweden:** On June 17, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs extended its advisory against non-essential travel to countries outside the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA), and the Schengen area until Aug. 31. As of June 30, the advisory against non-essential travel to Belgium, Croatia, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland will be removed. For other countries in the EU, the EEA, and the Schengen area, the advisory against travel remains in place until July 15.
- **Poland:** As of June 13, Poland's borders are open to travel for citizens and residents of the EU, Norway, Switzerland, and the UK. International flights to and from other EU countries resumed on June 16. Border restrictions are in place for travelers who are not citizens or residents of the EU, Norway, Switzerland, or the UK; until further notice such travelers are not allowed to enter Poland, unless they qualify for an exemption.
- **Turkey:** Turkish citizens and residents must request a HES (Hayat Eve Sigar) Code for domestic and international flights, train, and ferry travel. Foreigners and passengers in transit are not required to have a HES code. [Information on how to obtain this code is available here](#). On June 11, the Turkish government announced opening the majority of its international air, land, and sea borders. The border with Iran remains closed. The border with Syria remains closed.

- **Israel:** On March 18, the government of Israel announced that most foreigners (exceptions apply), who are not Israeli citizens or permanent residents, will not be allowed to enter Israel. Travelers should not board flights to Israel without a pre-clearance letter from the Israel government, as there is no assurance they will be admitted into the country. All arriving passengers, including U.S. citizens, may be subject to a health screening and/or a mandatory 14-day quarantine in a government-established quarantine center. Individuals who can maintain proper home isolation (such as a completely separate housing unit with no other occupants) may be allowed to undergo their 14-day required self isolation at their residence. Land border crossings may be closed with little or no advance notice. As of March 18, the government of Israel announced the closure of its borders with Egypt and Jordan.
 - **West Bank (Israel-controlled):** The West Bank has been under a state of emergency since March 5, 2020. Most restrictions have been lifted, with social distancing measures remaining in place.
 - **West Bank (Palestinian Authority):** The governors of Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, and Bethlehem announced jurisdiction-wide lockdowns effective July 2. The latest information can be found (in Arabic only) on the [PA Ministry of Health website](#). Travelers passing through any open checkpoints between Israel and the West Bank may be subject to increased scrutiny and significant delays. [Further checkpoint information is available here.](#)
 - **Gaza:** The government of Israel has stated that travel in and out of Gaza through the Erez crossing is restricted to urgent humanitarian cases only. The de facto authority in Gaza stated that travel in and out of Gaza will only be permitted for urgent humanitarian cases and that those coming into Gaza will be quarantined for a period of 21 days.
- **Mexico:** The United States and Mexico entered a joint initiative on March 21 restricting non-essential travel along the U.S.- Mexico land border. The restrictions are in place until at least July 21.
- **Argentina:** Per the latest Argentine government policy, any foreigner who is not a resident in Argentina will not be permitted to enter Argentina. The government of Argentina has also announced that the national quarantine that began on March 20 has been extended through July 17, with greater restrictions in the greater Buenos Aires area. The Argentine government has imposed strict movement restrictions, which are region-specific.
- **Brazil:** On June 20, the government of Brazil extended the current ban on foreigners entering the country by air, land, and sea through July 5, and it was extended again through July 29. Several states and local governments across Brazil have issued decrees that restrict the movement of people. Individuals should confirm the requirements with the local government prior to movement.
- **Chile:** As of March 18, Chile's borders are closed for entry. Chilean citizens and permanent residents are exempted and may still enter Chile at this time. All foreigners and Chileans entering Chile are subject to a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine. The Chilean government has declared a 90-day state of emergency, which took effect March 19. The declaration was renewed on June 16 for an additional 90 days, or through Sept. 14. Travelers should be prepared for further travel restrictions with little or no advance notice at the local, regional, and national government levels. The Chilean armed forces are present at ports of entry to ensure compliance with these restrictions. Chile has declared nationwide curfew requirements from 10:00 p.m. – 5:00 a.m. [A permit to leave your residence during this time period can be obtained here.](#)
- **India:** India has imposed strict travel restrictions on foreigners. Depending on the country passengers arrive from, there may be a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine period. Anyone arriving by air is also subject to health screening and testing.

- **Japan:** Non-Japanese citizens who leave Japan will not be able to return under current conditions.

6. Bottom Line

Travel restrictions, embassy/consulate closures, and health restrictions are being implemented and updated by governments on a regular basis. If international travel is required, confirm required documentation and information for each country before departure. Also, remain flexible and be prepared for delays. [View country-specific information here.](#)

For more information and updates on the developing COVID-19 situation, visit [GT's Health Emergency Preparedness Task Force: Coronavirus Disease 2019.](#)

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