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Circular H 44.../2022

**COVID VACCINE PROJECT OFFICE: COVID-19 VACCINATION EXEMPTIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICANS TRAVELLING TO INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS**

**Background**

Several countries have instituted strict COVID-19 vaccine mandates for people entering from other countries. Primary series and booster doses of Pfizer and J&J vaccine are widely available to adolescents over 12 years old and adults within South Africa.

Contra-indications to receiving COVID-19 vaccination are uncommon and include immediate or severe allergic reactions to a previous dose or a component of a COVID-19 vaccine. Requirements for granting of vaccination exemptions are variable between countries, however the basic requirement for most countries is a letter from a physician with acceptable proof of the information provided.

The National and Provincial Departments of Health in South Africa **do not** provide medical exemption certificates for COVID-19 vaccination for the purposes of travel out of the country.

**Guidance to travellers that request vaccination exemption certificate:**

1. Travellers who require medical exemption from COVID-19 vaccination should be advised to **contact the relevant embassy** of the country that they will be travelling to, to understand and follow the required processes to apply for medical exemption. (See [Annexure 1](#) for the current requirements for selected countries – this could change at any time)
2. A medical exemption certificate should always be provided by the traveller's **personal treating physician**. Notable that this could be a public sector doctor.
3. Travellers should consult with their treating physician, who should provide a medical certificate based on their medical history, in the **format required by the relevant country** they will be travelling to.

If further information is required, please contact [vanessa.mudaly@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:vanessa.mudaly@westerncape.gov.za)

JO Arendse  
Chief Director: ECSS

Date: 29 March 2022

## **ANNEXURE 1: REQUIREMENTS FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION EXEMPTION FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

### **1. US**

You must show a letter from a licensed physician documenting the medical contraindication to the airline or aircraft operator before boarding a flight to the United States.

The letter:

- Must be signed and dated on official letterhead that contains contact information (name, address, and phone number) of a licensed healthcare provider.
- Must clearly state that you have a medical contraindication to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. The name of the COVID-19 vaccine product and the medical condition must both be listed. Medical contraindications to COVID-19 vaccination include immediate or severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) after a previous dose or component of a COVID-19 vaccine or known allergy to a component of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Must have sufficient personally identifiable information (full name plus at least one other identifier such as date of birth or passport number) to confirm that the letter matches with your passport or other travel information.

If your letter is in a language other than English, check with your airlines or aircraft operator to find out if translation of the letter is necessary for their review.

### **2. Australia**

To access the same travel arrangements as fully vaccinated travellers, you must provide acceptable proof that you cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

If you are entering Australia and have a medical contraindication recorded in the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) you can show an Australian COVID-19 digital certificate to airline staff. You can otherwise show your immunisation history statement.

If you do not have your medical contraindication recorded in the AIR you will need to show airline staff a medical certificate that indicates you are unable to be vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine because of a medical condition. The medical certificate must be in English and include the following information:

- your name (this must match your travel identification documents)
- date of medical consultation and details of your medical practitioner
- details that clearly outline that you have a medical condition which means you cannot receive a COVID-19 vaccination (vaccination is contraindicated).

Note that this category does not include people who have received non-TGA approved or recognised vaccines.

The Australian Department of Health advises that previous infection with COVID-19 is not considered a medical contraindication for COVID-19 vaccination.

Your medical practitioner can find information on medical conditions that mean vaccination is contraindicated on the Department of Health website. The website also includes information on conditions not considered to be a contraindication for COVID-19 vaccination and not accepted for the purpose of a medical exemption to vaccination for travel to Australia. For more information see Evidence of Medical Contraindication to COVID-19 vaccine.



You are responsible for ensuring your proof meets these requirements. Airlines will request your certificate at check-in. You should check any requirements, particularly quarantine and post-arrival testing requirements for all states and territories you will travel to and transit.

If you are planning on traveling onwards to or through a different state or territory when you arrive in Australia, you need to check domestic travel restrictions. States and territories can apply their own travel restrictions. You are responsible for complying with the travel restrictions and requirements that apply to you.

If you cannot provide acceptable medical evidence, you may need to apply for a travel exemption to travel to Australia.

### 3. UK

The UK has removed all remaining Covid-19-related restrictions on international travel on 18 March 2022. You do not need to complete a UK passenger locator form before you travel, take any COVID-19 tests or quarantine when you arrive in England, regardless of vaccination status.

You may, however, require proof of vaccination status for entry to certain venues while in the UK.

### 4. Dubai

Requirements for all passengers arriving in Dubai:

From 26 February 2022, passengers travelling to Dubai from all countries (GCC included) must fulfil **one** of the below requirements

- Present a valid vaccination certificate(s) reflecting that the passenger is fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the WHO or the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and includes a QR code
- Present a valid negative COVID-19 PCR test certificate issued within 48 hours after the sample was collected and issued by an approved health service provider with a QR code
- Present a valid medical certificate with a QR code issued by the relevant authorities that the passenger has recovered from COVID-19 within 1 month from the date of recovery to the date of arrival

If requested, passengers must undergo a PCR test on arrival in Dubai and self-quarantine until they receive a negative result. Passengers who test positive for COVID-19 must follow the guidelines issued by the Dubai Health Authority.

Note:

- Printed or digital PCR test certificates or vaccination certificates are accepted in English or Arabic and must include a QR code. SMS certificates are not accepted.
- COVID-19 PCR test or vaccination certificates in other languages are acceptable if they can be validated at the departure point.
- COVID-19 vaccination certificates without a QR code can be accepted for travel to Dubai as long as the vaccination certificate is issued by test centres/organisations recognised/ approved by the national health authorities of the country.
- PCR tests must be based on a molecular diagnostic test intended for the qualitative detection of nucleic acid for SARS-COV-2 viral RNA. Rapid antigen, antibody or any form of rapid lateral flow tests and home test kits will not be accepted.
- For transit passenger(s), the rules and conditions for entry at the final destination will apply.

