

CDC Lifts Some Restrictions for Vaccinated Travelers

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People who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus can safely resume some travel, so long as they wear a mask in public and take certain other precautions, according to updated guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

However, employers may want to hold off on updating their travel policies. CDC Director Rochelle Walensky still recommends against travel because COVID-19 cases continue to rise, CNN reported (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/02/health/cdc-travel-guidance-fully-vaccinated-wellness/index.html>).

"It's possible that some people who are fully vaccinated could get COVID-19," a CDC spokesperson told *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/01/health/coronavirus-vaccine-walensky.html>). "The evidence isn't clear whether they can spread the virus to others. We are continuing to evaluate the evidence."

The updated guidance now states that for domestic travel, fully vaccinated people do not need to get tested for the coronavirus before or after a trip or isolate upon their return. For international trips, vaccinated travelers do not need to obtain a pre-travel test before departing the U.S. (unless their destination requires it) and do not need to self-quarantine after arriving in the U.S., according to the CDC. However, international travelers still must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than three days before boarding a flight to the U.S., and the CDC recommends getting tested again three to five days after entering the country.

"The COVID-19 situation, including the spread of new or concerning variants, differs from country to country, and even fully vaccinated travelers need to pay close attention to the situation at their destination before traveling," the CDC said.

The agency said unvaccinated people should continue to follow prior guidelines.

"CDC recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated, because travel increases your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19," according to an agency announcement.

We've rounded up resources and articles from *SHRM Online* and other trusted outlets on the news.

'Fully Vaccinated'

The CDC's updated travel guidelines apply to people who have received a vaccine authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), including the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccines. For the new guidelines to apply, travelers must be "fully vaccinated," which means they have to wait two weeks after they received a single-shot vaccine or the second dose of a two-shot vaccine.

The CDC said fully vaccinated travelers should still take certain precautions to protect others, including wearing a mask while in public and on trains, planes and buses; staying 6 feet away from people who are not traveling with them; and frequently washing their hands or using hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.

Additionally, the CDC warned, "If you have a condition or are taking medication that weakens your immune system, you may NOT be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated."

(U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>))

Studies Show 'Real-World Effectiveness'

The CDC's guidance was updated in light of several studies highlighting the real-world effectiveness

(https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/03/29/vaccine-effective-essential-workers-study/?itid=lk_inline_manual_5) of COVID-19 vaccines. The agency confirmed that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been 90 percent effective in protecting against infection and spread of the coronavirus. Vaccination rates have also improved, with nearly 3 million people receiving a vaccine each day. Almost 40 percent of adults received at least one dose as of April 1.

(*The Washington Post* (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/04/02/cdc-fully-vaccinated-may-travel/>))

Check State and Local Guidelines

Travelers should check all relevant state and local COVID-19 restrictions before they leave home. Some locations may require travelers to self-quarantine after arriving or provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test before entering the area.

(CNN (<https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/us-state-travel-restrictions-covid-19/index.html>))

Monitoring Off-Duty Conduct

Pandemic fatigue, increased COVID-19 vaccine distribution and warmer weather may prompt employees to book personal travel.

Employers should note that some state laws prohibit employers from taking any action against an employee for off-duty conduct. However, even these laws allow such intrusions when there are legitimate business reasons, said Angelo Filippi, an attorney with Kelley Kronenberg in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "The safety threat to other employees would likely be valid grounds to require disclosures." He noted that policies and practice must be consistently applied.

(*SHRM Online* (www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/review-business-travel-and-vacation-policies-as-pandemic-continues.aspx))

6 Burning COVID-19-Related Legal Questions for 2021

COVID-19 may eventually go away, but the challenges it has created and will continue to create for employers won't. Managing a workforce in these troubling times will remain difficult. *HR Magazine* assembled a group of five attorneys to answer pressing COVID-19-related questions that will impact the workplace in the year ahead. Here's what they had to say.

(*SHRM Online* (www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/spring2021/Pages/six-burning-covid-legal-questions-for-2021.aspx))

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