



Aide-Memoire

UPCOMING ADVICE RELATING TO SUSPENSION OF ENTRY TO HIGH-RISK TRAVELLERS

To	The Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister The Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response	Report No	DPMC-2020/21-795
From	Cheryl Barnes, Deputy Chief Executive, COVID-19 Group, DPMC	Date	9/04/2021

Purpose

1. The government has decided to temporarily suspend entry to travellers originating from India, taking effect from Sunday 11 April 2021 and remaining in effect until Wednesday 28 April 2021 [DPMC-2020/21-775 refers]. This note outlines:
 - a. measures already in place for the highest-risk travellers, which will be the baseline for entry into New Zealand should travel from India resume on 28 April 2021; and
 - b. forthcoming advice regarding additional measures which may be applied to travellers affected by the suspension, once travel resumes (*Appendix 1 refers*).
2. The forthcoming advice will inform decisions around when and how to lift this temporary suspension of entry and whether additional measures are needed to further mitigate the COVID-19 infection risks presented by certain types of traveller.

Existing risk mitigations for the highest-risk travellers

3. There are several risk mitigations in place at, and before, our border under the "Keep it out" pillar of the Elimination Strategy. These include:
 - a. A 14-day stay in Managed Isolation and Quarantine for all arrivals, which includes:
 - i. all MIFs operating in Level 4 environments, meaning that every returnee is treated as if they may have COVID-19;
 - ii. Tests around day 0/1¹, day 3 and day 12;

¹ except for those arriving from Australia, the Pacific and Antarctica.

- iii. Room restrictions before day 0/1 test results, and in other specific circumstances (e.g. after potential contact with a recent positive case); and
 - iv. cohorting of passengers arriving on at a similar time into the same facilities and on similar activity schedules, as far as is possible within safe operating parameters.
- b. Pre-departure testing: evidence of a negative test result in the 72 hours prior to departure.
4. Broadly speaking, these measures have been effective at keeping New Zealanders safe from COVID-19, with high levels of detection and infection control evident within border facilities. We know from experience that there is no way to reduce infection risk from the border to zero, and that COVID-19 incidence in arrivals is a critical factor which stresses our border systems.

Lifting the suspension of travel and any further risk mitigations

5. Officials will assess whether there are further options to amend or strengthen our approach to the highest-risk travellers at the border, as indicated at Appendix 1, in order to facilitate a lifting of the suspension to travellers from India. We will provide this advice to support cabinet decision on current arrangements on or around Monday 19 April.

Advice needs to come much faster than that. CH

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that you note the contents of this aide-memoire.

Cheryl Barnes

Cheryl Barnes
Deputy Chief Executive
COVID-19 Group, DPMC

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Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern Prime Minister
Date: / / 2021
NOTED
<i>CH</i>
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 response
Date: 10 / 04 / 2021



Appendix 1: Forthcoming advice relating to decision to suspend entry to travellers from India

<i>Item</i>	<i>Summary</i>	<i>Lead agencies (officials)</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Timeframe (delivery to MO)</i>
Advice on either interim or enhanced measures, post 28 April, for travellers originating from India	<p>This will include an assessment of current risks and advice ahead of the 28 April deadline for the temporary suspension of travel, and analysis of possible further options including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measures to manage the risk in country of origin, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Requiring vaccinations prior to departure; o Requiring additional rapid result testing <u>at airports</u> pre-departure; o Requiring self-isolation after the pre-departure test and prior to boarding; and o Advice on extension of the suspension of entry - Measures to further mitigate the risk on an ongoing basis, once passengers arrive in NZ, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A more fine-grained approach to <u>cohorting travellers</u>²; o Requiring arrivals from specific cohorts to remain in their rooms (until negative day 3 or day 5 tests); and o Enhanced testing of the cohort upon arrival. <p><i>NB: You should note that further assessment of these options may determine that some are either not viable or do not deliver a demonstrable and proportionate public health benefit.</i></p>	<p>DPMC with input from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MOH - MBIE - MOT - MFAT - Customs 	Minister for COVID-19 response	On or around Monday 19 April
Humanitarian Exemptions	MOH-led workstream to agree a process for operationalising humanitarian exemptions	MOH		
Developing a framework for assessing COVID-19 country risk to inform our future approach to border settings	<p>Initial advice on refining the risk assessment relating to different travellers, relating risk assessment to potential different traveller treatment as they arrive in New Zealand.</p> <p>As well as being relevant to immediate advice on suspension of entry to travellers from India, this analysis will be an important enabler of future decisions around the border taken over the next year.</p>	MOH and DPMC , with support from MFAT Post network	Minister for COVID-19 response	19 April

² Noting that transition to a cohort approach at the facility level will take 2-4 weeks, and that for some levels of granularity, cohorting will be operationally infeasible.