



## COVID-19 – Media Lines

### Mandatory Isolation for Persons Returning to Canada

**Issue Statement:** The Government of Canada’s Emergency Order under the [Quarantine Act](#) already requires anyone entering Canada—whether by air, land or sea—to:

- isolate for 14 days if they have symptoms of or confirmed COVID-19, or
- quarantine for 14 days if they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e., asymptomatic).

Order in Council 10 replaces the previous version of the similarly named Order, provides clarification on terminology and is based on the latest scientific evidence available.

Under the updated Order, any traveller, unless exempt, arriving in Canada—whether they are symptomatic or asymptomatic—cannot isolate or quarantine (respectively) in a place where they would be in contact with people who are vulnerable, such as adults aged 65 years or over and people with pre-existing medical conditions.

In addition, every traveller will need to confirm that they have a suitable place to isolate or quarantine where they will have access to basic necessities, such as food and medication. Travellers will be expected to make plans for where they will isolate or quarantine in advance of arriving to Canada. Travellers who do not have an appropriate place in which to isolate or quarantine themselves must go to a place designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada. These criteria are newly applied to asymptomatic travellers.

Note: A robust package of Questions and Answers on the Emergency Order is available if needed.

### Key Messages:

- The Government of Canada’s top priority is the health and safety of Canadians. We are taking unprecedented action to respond to the COVID-19 epidemic. This includes continuously assessing the risks to adapt our response accordingly.
- The Government of Canada’s Emergency Order under the *Quarantine Act* already requires persons entering Canada—whether by air, land or sea—to isolate for 14 days if they have symptoms of COVID-19, or to quarantine themselves for 14 days if they are asymptomatic to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- An updated Order is being issued to provide clarification on terminology and is based on new scientific evidence that people without symptoms may transmit the virus.
- Under the updated Order, any traveller arriving in Canada—whether they are symptomatic or asymptomatic—cannot isolate or quarantine (respectively) in a place where they would be in contact with people who are vulnerable, such as adults aged 65 years or over and people with pre-existing medical conditions.
- In addition, every traveller will need to confirm that they have a suitable place to isolate or quarantine where they will have access to basic necessities, such as food and medication. Travellers will be expected to make plans for where they will isolate or quarantine in advance of arriving to Canada. Travellers who do not have an appropriate place in which to isolate or



quarantine themselves must go to a place designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada. These criteria are newly applied to asymptomatic travellers.

- This Order is mandatory for anyone entering Canada on or after April 15, 2020.
- If a traveller is symptomatic and does not have private transportation or an adequate place to isolate, they will be required to isolate for 14 days in a place designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada.
- Asymptomatic travellers are still at risk of infecting others and will be required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering to proceed to their final destination where they must quarantine for 14 days, and follow instructions provided by the public health authority specified by a screening officer or quarantine officer if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19. They will be provided with a mask if they do not have one.
- Symptomatic travellers are also required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering during transit to their final destination for isolation and whenever they cannot maintain a 2 metre physical distance from others.
- Asymptomatic travellers without an adequate place for quarantine will be subject to the same expectations as those who are symptomatic, and must go to a place designated by the Chief Public Officer of Health of Canada.
- [Certain persons](#) who cross the border regularly to ensure the continued flow of goods and essential services, or individuals who receive or provide other essential services to Canadians, are exempt from the requirements to quarantine if they are asymptomatic (i.e., do not have symptoms of COVID-19). [insert hyperlink to [exemption list. \(make sure this is the most recent CPHO one\)](#)]
- Individuals exempt from quarantine requirements must wear a non-medical mask or face covering to proceed to their final destination. Follow arrival to their final destination, exempted persons should practise physical distancing, consider the use of a mask or face covering when they cannot maintain physical distancing of 2 metres from others, self-monitor for symptoms, stay in their place of residence as much as possible and follow the instructions of their local public health authority if they feel sick.
- We've based this decision on the latest scientific evidence and following discussions with the provinces and territories.
- These additional measures will contribute to containing the epidemic and preventing further spread of COVID-19 in Canada.
- These measures will also help protect older adults and people with pre-existing medical conditions, who are at greatest risk of severe health complications related to COVID-19.
- The Government of Canada will continue to work closely with local, provincial, territorial and international partners to limit the introduction of COVID-19.

**Enforcement:**



- Spot checks will be conducted by the Government of Canada to verify compliance.
- Maximum penalties include a fine of up to \$750,000 or imprisonment for six months, or both, for failure to comply with this Order.
- A person who causes a risk of imminent death or serious bodily harm to another person while willfully or recklessly contravening the *Quarantine Act* or the regulations could be liable for a fine of up to \$1,000,000 or imprisonment of up to three years, or both.
- Amendments are being made to the *Contraventions Regulations* to make non-compliance with specific requirements under the *Quarantine Act* contraventions for which tickets can be issued.
- The fine amounts for these contraventions will range from \$275 to \$1,000. The fine amount for contraventions committed by young persons is \$100.

### ***Designated quarantine facilities:***

- Canada's Chief Public Health Officer has designated quarantine facilities (e.g., hotels) across the country, including in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montréal.
- Canada's Chief Public Health Officer has the authority to designate any place in Canada as a quarantine facility if deemed necessary to protect public health in accordance with sections 7 and 8 of the *Quarantine Act*.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **Q1. What is different in this Order from the previous one?**

Based on new scientific evidence showing that people without symptoms may transmit the disease, any traveller now arriving in Canada—whether they are symptomatic or asymptomatic—is now required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering while in transit to isolation (if sick) or quarantine.

Previously, only symptomatic people were prohibited from isolating where a vulnerable person would be exposed.

This Order extends that directive to asymptomatic individuals as well. As such, asymptomatic people may not quarantine in a place where they would be in contact with people who are vulnerable, such as adults aged 65 years or over and people with pre-existing medical conditions. (The Order does not prevent consenting adults or parents & minor children from isolating or quarantining together, as appropriate.)

If an asymptomatic person is unable to quarantine themselves in a suitable location, they will be transferred to a quarantine facility chosen by the Chief Public Health Officer.

In addition, the 14-day quarantine period is reset if the asymptomatic person develops any signs and symptoms of COVID-19, or if they are exposed to someone who exhibits signs and symptoms after entering Canada, or if they are exposed to someone subject to this Quarantine order who exhibits signs and symptoms or is diagnosed with COVID-19.



## **Q2. What happens if someone does not comply with the Order?**

Failure to comply with this Order is an offence under the *Quarantine Act*.

Individuals who contravene the mandatory isolation or the mandatory quarantine requirements may be subject to a range of enforcement measures under the *Quarantine Act*, which include verbal and written warnings, and arrest, or detention.

Spot checks will be conducted by the Government of Canada to verify compliance.

Maximum penalties include a fine of up to \$750,000 or imprisonment for six months, or both. Peace officers will use their discretion in determining the most appropriate action in each circumstance.

Further, a person who causes a risk of imminent death or serious bodily harm to another person while willfully or recklessly contravening the *Quarantine Act* or the Regulations could be liable for a fine of up to \$1,000,000 or imprisonment of up to three years, or both.

As a result of regulatory amendments made under the *Contraventions Act*, enforcement authorities, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as well as local or provincial police forces, can now issue tickets to individuals who do not comply with orders under the *Quarantine Act*, such as orders requiring individuals to isolate after international travel.

## **Q3. Are provinces and territories expected to check compliance with a sampling of the mandatory quarantine orders?**

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) will work with federal and provincial partners to verify compliance with the Order.

PHAC is working with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and provincial law enforcement agencies to verify the compliance of returning travellers with the mandatory isolation order using a risk-based approach, based on the information given by travellers at the border.

The information required to follow up with travellers is collected at the border and shared with provincial law enforcement agencies.

Travellers are informed upon entry of the compliance monitoring and verification activities, the possible consequences of non-compliance, and the enforcement actions and penalties they could face.

## **Q4. Why can some travellers isolate at home and others must go to a quarantine facility or hospital?**

All travellers entering Canada will be instructed to go directly to their place of isolation (if symptomatic) or quarantine (if asymptomatic), without delay, and remain there for 14 days. If the traveller is symptomatic the quarantine officer may have them transported to a hospital, depending on the severity of symptoms or illness. All travellers must also have a suitable place to isolate or quarantine where they will have access to basic necessities, such as food and medication.

Any traveller arriving in Canada—whether they are symptomatic or asymptomatic— cannot isolate or quarantine (respectively) in a place where they would be in contact with people who are vulnerable, such as adults aged 65 years or over and people with pre-existing medical conditions.



Any traveller who lives with people who are vulnerable or who does not have an appropriate place in which to isolate or quarantine themselves must go to a quarantine facility designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada.

In addition, symptomatic travellers must have private transportation in order to proceed to their own place of isolation. If a traveller who is symptomatic does not have private transportation, they will be required to isolate for 14 days in a place designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada.

If the traveller is unable to fulfill the conditions of the Order, they will be required to isolate or quarantine for 14 days in a quarantine facility chosen by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada.

**Q5. If a person can't isolate or quarantine in their home, what are the quarantine facilities they will go to? How do people get to these locations? Who provides medical assistance, food and help with other needs?**

The Government of Canada has established designated quarantine facilities—e.g., hotels—to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19. Quarantine facilities will be used to lodge symptomatic persons who are unable to isolate at home because:

- they do not have private transportation;
- they do not have access to private transportation;
- they do not have access to basic necessities (i.e., food, medication, etc.); or
- they live with a vulnerable person(s), such as adults aged 65 years or over and individuals with underlying medical conditions.

Asymptomatic travellers without an appropriate place to quarantine themselves will be subject to the same expectations as those who are symptomatic, and will also be sent to a designated quarantine facility specified by the Chief Public Health Officer.

Transportation from the point of entry to the quarantine facility may be provided by the Government of Canada.

PHAC is working with partners to provide needs, including food and any medical needs, of travellers who will be in quarantine or isolation at a designated quarantine facility.

These measures will help protect older adults and medically vulnerable people, who are at the greatest risk of severe health complications related to COVID-19.

**Q6. When does the 14-day period start? Is it from the day of entry into Canada or the day the traveller arrives at the place where they will isolate?**

The 14-day period begins on the day the person enters Canada.

Individuals should also consult their [provincial or territorial public health authority](#) for any additional measures and/or restrictions, such as a provincial emergency order that requires individuals to isolate themselves for 14 days upon entering the province from another part of Canada.



**Q7. What type of masks or face coverings will be provided at border entries? If all travellers entering Canada will be required to wear masks, how will this impact the supplies available for healthcare workers?**

Travellers require non-medical masks or face coverings upon arrival. Travellers can also wear homemade cloth face coverings. Masks or face coverings may be provided upon arrival as appropriate.

*If pressed if they are medical or non-medical masks:*

- Travellers are being provided medical cloth masks at this time. Arrangements are underway to use non-medical masks in the near future.

Medical masks, including surgical, medical procedure face masks and respirators (such as N95 masks), should be reserved for healthcare workers and those providing direct care to COVID-19 patients.

Even while wearing a non-medical mask or face covering, strict hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand-washing and physical distancing, must be maintained to reduce your chance of passing on the virus to someone else. It is also important to be aware that wearing a non-medical mask or face covering in the community has not been proven to protect the person wearing it. Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering is an additional measure for people—including those who do not have symptoms—to take to protect others.

**Q8. Will the new requirements (e.g., travellers having to confirm their planned place to isolate or quarantine; being given masks or face coverings) create back-ups at airports?**

With the introduction of the updated Emergency Order, we are building on measures previously implemented on March 25, 2020, to reduce the introduction and further spread of COVID-19 in Canada. While it can be expected that processing travellers at the border may initially increase wait times, the additional measures being implemented will further contribute to the reduction and spread of COVID-19. Efforts will be made to expedite processing travellers at the borders, while respecting public health measures and guidance, such as physical distancing by maintaining a 2-metre distance between travellers. All travellers are expected to contribute to help keep Canadians safe.