

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Travel

During Phase One, non-essential travel outside of the National Capitol Region is discouraged. As travel increases your chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19, staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick.

There is no simple definition of what is essential or nonessential travel. Ultimately, this is a decision for the individual based on the risk and their personal responsibility. Examples of essential travel could include traveling for a family emergency or essential work-related travel. Examples of non-essential travel could include vacations, school trips, or work conferences.

Prior to traveling, it is important to determine whether the risks to yourself and others for travel outside of the National Capitol Region outweigh the benefit of that travel at this time. Do not travel if you are sick, or if you have been around someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days, and do not travel with someone who is sick. For additional information, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/phaseone.

Please note that any individual experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or recently exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, should not travel due to the risk of exposing others. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or otherwise feeling unwell.

Consider the following when contemplating travel:

- If COVID-19 is spreading where you are going, you can get infected while traveling and spread it to members of your household when you return.
- If COVID-19 is still spreading in your community, you can potentially spread the virus to others while traveling, even if you don't have symptoms.
- Older adults or people with underlying health conditions are **at an increased risk for complications** from COVID-19 and should be cautious.

Certain increased risks are associated with various travel methods:

- Air travel: Air travel requires spending time in security lines and airport terminals, which can bring you in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces. Also, social distancing is difficult on crowded flights, and you may have to sit near others (within 6 feet), sometimes for hours, increasing risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Bus or train travel: Traveling on buses or trains for any length of time can involve sitting or standing within 6 feet of others.
- Car travel: Making stops along the way for gas, food, or bathroom breaks can put you and your traveling companions in close contact with other people and as well as into contact with potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Cruise ships: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently recommends that travelers defer all cruise travel worldwide.

Anticipate travel needs:

- Bring enough medicine for the entire trip.

- Pack enough alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and keep it with you.
- Bring a cloth face covering to wear in public places, including outdoor areas where it is difficult to maintain social distancing.
- Prepare food and water for your trip. Pack non-perishable food in case restaurants and stores are closed.
- If you clean your travel lodgings, see the CDC's guidance on cleaning and disinfection [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html#clean-disinfect](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html#clean-disinfect).

Follow state and local travel restrictions:

- For up-to-date information and travel guidance, check the state or local health department where you are, along your route, and at your planned destination. A list of state and territorial health department websites can be found on the CDC website: [cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html](https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html).
- While you are traveling, it is possible a state or local government may put into place travel restrictions, such as stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders, mandated quarantines upon arrival, or even state border closures. Plan to keep checking for updates as you travel.

Many international destinations have travel restrictions in place prohibiting non-residents from entering or requiring self-isolation for visitors.

- Restrictions for visitors change frequently. It is important to know what restrictions are in place before planning and departing for international destinations.
- Note that if you do travel abroad, there is no guarantee you will be able to return due to potential for changing travel restrictions and interruptions.
- For country-specific travel health information, please consult the CDC Travel Health Notices webpage at [cdc.gov/travel/notices](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/notices).

Upon returning home from international travel or an area experiencing widespread community transmission (a hot zone), you are encouraged to stay home for 14 days from the time you returned home and take the following precautions.

- Check your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also watch for cough, trouble breathing, and other possible symptoms of COVID-19. Use a temperature log to document your temperature.
- Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school.
- Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares.
- Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet).

If you develop symptoms, then

- Consult with your healthcare provider if you are sick or concerned you may have been exposed to COVID-19. Call ahead and let healthcare providers know your symptoms.
- Call 911 if you have a medical emergency such as difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face.
- If you need a COVID-19 test, information on options for COVID-19 testing are available

at coronavirus.dc.gov/testing.

The recommendations will continue to be updated. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov regularly for the most current information.