

## **Questions from U.S. DOT calls with International and U.S. Maritime Industry**

1. *Is the USA vaccination card accepted worldwide? Currently it is just a piece of paper it has hand-written name and vaccinated on it which is not accepted worldwide. Rest of the world issues QR code to person vaccinated.*

At this time, the best record of COVID-19 vaccination for people vaccinated in the United States is the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. However, it may not be accepted as proof of COVID-19 vaccination for domestic or international travel because there are no globally recognized standards for COVID-19 vaccination documentation. Jurisdictions make their own determinations regarding what types of documentation to prove COVID-19 vaccination status are acceptable.

2. *For arriving unvaccinated mariners, the requirement is for a second negative test within 3-5 days of arrival. For mariners who join a vessel that departs the US prior to the 3-5-day period, what would the United States government like us to do in this case?*

Non-cruise ship mariners who are noncitizen, nonimmigrants arriving to the U.S. via aircraft and have not been fully vaccinated must get tested with a [viral test](#) 3-5 days after arrival in the U.S., unless they have documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days. Non-cruise ship operators and mariners have several options to fulfill this requirement:

- Mariners can visit a shoreside testing facility (e.g., testing at a pharmacy or healthcare facility).
- Operators can contract with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to preform testing onboard the vessel.
- Operators can provide crew with COVID-19 self-tests (sometimes referred to as home tests or at-home tests) or ask that mariners embark the vessel with their own self-test.
  - CDC recommends that if self-tests are used, they should be conducted under supervision of tele-medicine personnel.

All mariners whose post-arrival test is positive for COVID-19 or who develop COVID-19 symptoms must self-isolate until criteria are met for discontinuation of isolation according to the most current CDC guidance. Those who have recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days should consult with a healthcare provider for testing recommendations.

3. *Does the answer to the question above also apply to unvaccinated American-national mariners flying back to the US after disembarking a ship overseas?*

The requirement to provide a proof of vaccination before boarding a flight to the U.S. does not apply to U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, U.S. lawful permanent residents, and immigrants, regardless of vaccination status.

However, effective November 8, 2021, before boarding a flight to the U.S. from a foreign country, all air passengers– 2 years of age and older and regardless of citizenship– are required to present a negative COVID-19 [viral test](#) result (within a time period based on their

vaccination status) or present documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days.

- **For people who are fully vaccinated**, the viral test must be conducted on a sample taken no more than **3 days** before the flight's departure. If the test was done 2-3 days before the flight, you must show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- **For people who not fully vaccinated**, the viral test must be conducted on a sample taken no more than **1 day** before the flight's departure.
- **People who recently recovered from COVID-19** may instead travel with documentation of recovery from COVID-19 (i.e., their positive COVID-19 viral test result on a sample taken no more than 90 days before the flight's departure from a foreign country and a letter from a licensed healthcare provider or a public health official stating that they were cleared to travel).

For more information about these testing requirements, visit [Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Documentation of Recovery from COVID-19](#).

Also, while not required for U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or lawful permanent residents, or immigrants, it is *recommended* that all international travelers get tested with a COVID-19 [viral test](#) 3-5 days after travel. Travelers should also follow all [state and local](#) recommendations or requirements after travel.

It is also *recommended* that those who are not fully vaccinated:

- Stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel, even if they test negative at 3-5 days.
- If they don't get tested, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel.

Mariners who recovered from a documented COVID-19 infection **within the past 90 days (regardless of vaccination status)** are not recommended to get tested or self-quarantine after travel. If they develop COVID-19 symptoms after travel, they should [isolate](#) and consult with a healthcare provider for testing recommendations.

For more information, please visit: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html#anchor\\_1634925927097](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html#anchor_1634925927097).

4. *With respect to the 24 hour test for unvaccinated mariners, will the airlines base the timing on the original itinerary as often flights are changed/delayed? ALSO Will the 24 hr. test for unvaccinated mariners, start with the boarding of the first departure flight as mariners can have multiple flights with multiple airlines?*

All air passengers, which includes mariners, arriving to the U.S. via one or more connecting flights can be tested within 1 day (if not fully vaccinated) or 3 days (if fully vaccinated) before the departure of the **first flight**.

All air passengers, which includes mariners, also have the **option of getting tested *en route*** during one of their connections. However, please consider whether testing in the connecting airport testing is available and if it is accessible while in transit. Air passengers who choose this strategy and are unable to get a test *en route* will not be able to board their flight to the United States. Additionally, air passengers who test positive *en route* will not be allowed to continue their travel to the United States and may need to stay at that location until they end isolation.

An air passenger, including mariners, who planned an itinerary incorporating one or more overnight stays *en route* to the U.S. will need to make sure his or her test is not expired before the flight that will enter the U.S. They do not need to be retested if the itinerary requires an overnight connection because of limitations in flight availability.

If the **first flight** in an air passenger's trip, regardless of vaccination status, is delayed past the 1-day or 3-day limit of testing due to a situation outside of his or her control (e.g., delays because of severe weather or aircraft mechanical problem), and that delay is **24 hours** or less past the 1-day or 3-day limit for testing, he or she does not need to be retested. If the delay is more than **24 hours** past the 1-day or 3-day, then he or she will need to be retested.

If a **connecting flight** in an air passenger's journey is delayed past the 1-day or 3-day limit of testing due to a situation outside of his or her control (e.g., delays because of severe weather or aircraft mechanical problem), and that delay is less than **48 hours** past the 1-day or 3-day limit for testing, he or she does not need to be retested. If the delay is more than **48 hours** past the 1-day or 3-day limit, then he or she will need to be retested.

For more information, please see the Frequently Asked Questions located here: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html#anchor\\_1635127083](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html#anchor_1635127083). CDC will be updating the FAQs as needed over the coming weeks.

5. *Will there be any provision for relaxing the 24 -hour test window before boarding a flight if such rapid tests are unavailable in some countries and compliance with this requirement is impossible?*

When making plans for travel, mariners should consider the availability of testing capacity and the time frame needed to obtain results.

For more information on where to obtain a test overseas, mariners should review the relevant [U.S. Embassy website](#).

Mariners may consider contacting the airline regarding options for changing their departure date to allow time for a test, see if the airline has identified options for testing, or if there are options available for changing their flights to transit through a location where they can get tested before boarding the final flight to the United States.

Also, mariners may consider using a self-test (sometimes referred to as home test) that meets the following criteria:

- The test must be a SARS-CoV-2 viral test (nucleic acid amplification test [NAAT] or antigen test) with Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- The testing procedure must include a telehealth service affiliated with the manufacturer of the test that provides real-time supervision remotely through an audio and video connection. Some FDA-authorized self-tests that include a telehealth service may require a prescription.
- The telehealth provider must confirm your identity, observe the sample collection and testing procedures, confirm the test result, and issue a report that meets the requirements of CDC's Order (see "What information must be included in the test result?" below).
- Airlines and other aircraft operators must be able to review and confirm your identity and the test result details. You must also be able to present the documentation of test results to U.S. officials at the port of entry and local/state health departments, if requested.

Please note, some countries may restrict importation of tests that are not authorized or registered there. Mariners who are considering bringing a U.S.-authorized test with them for use outside of the United States should contact authorities at their destination for information before travel.

Furthermore, mariners with connecting flights to the U.S. have the **option of getting tested *en route*** during one of their connections. However, please consider whether testing is available in the connecting airport testing and if it is accessible while in transit. Mariners who choose this strategy and are unable to get a test *en route* will not be able to board their flight to the United States. Additionally, mariners who tests positive *en route* will not be allowed to continue their travel and may need to stay at that location until they end isolation.

For more information, please visit the Frequently Asked Questions located here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html#aircraft>. CDC will be updating the FAQs as needed over the coming weeks.

6. *How will "mariner" or "mariner credentials" be identified?*

Mariners traveling pursuant to a C-1 (transit) and D (crewmember) nonimmigrant visa must present this documentation **AND** an official letter (paper or digital) from their employer indicating that their entry to the United States is required for the purpose of operating a vessel that will depart from a U.S. seaport to the airline representative prior to boarding.

For more information, please visit the Technical Instructions located here: <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/order-safe-travel/technical->

[instructions.html#anchor\\_1635183128475](#). CDC will be updating the Technical Instructions as needed over the coming weeks.

7. *What provisions are being made to allow a US mariner, who has to be discharged from a US-flagged ship in a foreign port because of Covid-19 infection, to fly back to US to obtain proper medical care?*

If there are health emergencies for any reason in a foreign country warranting emergency air evacuation to the United States, the company should contact the U.S. embassy/ consulate in-country.

Private flights or general aviation aircraft may transport a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, or exposed contacts, to the United States if they adhere to CDC's [Interim Guidance for Transporting or Arranging Transportation by Air into, from, or within the United States of People with COVID-19 or COVID-19 Exposure](#).

8. *When and where will written guidance be available?*

Please visit the webpages listed below for more information on CDC's Orders. CDC will continue to update these resources as needed over the coming weeks.

**International Travel—Information for U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals, U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents, and Immigrants**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html>

**Non-U.S. citizen, Non-U.S. immigrants: Air Travel to the United States**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/noncitizens-US-air-travel.html>

**Order: Implementing Presidential Proclamation on Safe Resumption of Global Travel During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/order-safe-travel.html>

**Requirement for Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination for Air Passengers**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/proof-of-vaccination.html>

**Technical Instructions for Implementing Presidential Proclamation *Advancing Safe Resumption of Global Travel During the COVID-19 Pandemic* and CDC's Order**

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/order-safe-travel/technical-instructions.html>

**Amended Order: Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test Result or Recovery from COVID-19 for All Airline Passengers Arriving into the United States**

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/fr-proof-negative-test.html>

## Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Documentation of Recovery from COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html>

## Order: Requirement for Airlines and Operators to Collect Contact Information for All Passengers Arriving into the United States

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/order-collect-contact-info.html>

9. *We've read the CDC advice and separately the proclamation on vaccinations for air passengers into the US and it looks like mariners transiting directly to the ship are exempt. Can you confirm please?*

The Proclamation excepts any noncitizen seeking entry as a mariner traveling pursuant to a C-1 and D nonimmigrant visa, if such mariner adheres to all industry standard protocols for the prevention of COVID-19, as set forth in relevant guidance for mariner health by the CDC. CDC's [Interim Guidance for Ships on Managing Suspected or Confirmed Cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) is the relevant guidance for non-cruise ship mariners.

Mariners traveling pursuant to a C-1 (transit) and D (crewmember) nonimmigrant visa must present this documentation **AND** an official letter (paper or digital) from their employer indicating that their entry to the United States is required for the purpose of operating a vessel that will depart from a U.S. seaport to the airline representative prior to boarding.

For more information, please visit the Technical Instructions located here:

[https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/order-safe-travel/technical-instructions.html#anchor\\_1635183128475](https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/order-safe-travel/technical-instructions.html#anchor_1635183128475). CDC will be updating the Technical Instructions as needed over the coming weeks.

Please see the information regarding requirements for testing and quarantine post-arrival by air conveyance apply for non-cruise ship mariners who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and without documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days.

10. *When referring to testing, are you talking about a PCR test or a lateral flow test? Lateral flow tests are less accurate than PCR tests and may put seafarers at risk.*

Effective November 8, 2021, before boarding a flight to the U.S. from a foreign country, all air passengers— 2 years of age and older and regardless of citizenship— are required to present a negative COVID-19 [viral test](#) result, that could be either an antigen test or a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), within a time period based on their vaccination status or present documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days. PCR (polymerase chain reaction) is a type of NAAT. A lateral flow test is a type of antigen test.

- **For people who are fully vaccinated**, the viral test must be conducted on a sample taken no more than **3 days** before the flight's departure. If the test was done



2-3 days before the flight, you must show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

- **For people who not fully vaccinated**, the viral test must be conducted on a sample taken no more than **1 day** before the flight's departure.
- **People who recently recovered from COVID-19** may instead travel with documentation of recovery from COVID-19 (i.e., their positive COVID-19 viral test result on a sample taken no more than 90 days before the flight's departure from a foreign country and a letter from a licensed healthcare provider or a public health official stating that they were cleared to travel).

For more information about these testing requirements, visit [Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Documentation of Recovery from COVID-19](#).

For information about the rationale for CDC's testing requirements, visit [Public Health Guidance for Potential COVID-19 Exposure Associated with Travel](#).

Non-cruise ship crew who are not fully vaccinated noncitizen, nonimmigrants arriving to the U.S. via aircraft must get tested with a [viral test](#) that could be either an antigen test or a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) 3-5 days after arrival in the U.S.

#### **Answers added on 11/5/21**

11. *Some confusion has arisen relative to a non-vaccinated seafarer with timely proof of a negative COVID test and whether they will automatically be subject to a 7 day quarantine period upon entry to the US for joining a vessel. Requirement for Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination for Air Passengers states that "you may further be required to attest that....(2) you will self-quarantine for a full 7 days, even if the test result to the post-arrival viral test is negative..." In this case, the individual will have in hand two negative tests (pre-departure and post-arrival). The language is confusing at best. Is it stating that you may be required to make the attestation, or you may be required to self-quarantine for 7 days? As you can imagine this is problematic for the industry given crew change schedules. Would CDC permit the inbound seafarer to quarantine aboard the vessel he is joining or would he have to quarantine shore side before being allowed to join the vessel after 7 days.*

**The requirements for testing and quarantine post-arrival by air conveyance apply to non-cruise ship mariners entering the United States as covered individuals who are:**

- **not fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and**
- **without documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days.**

**Cruise ship crew members** must follow the requirements of the Conditional Sailing Order during and after embarking the cruise ship. If crew will not be immediately embarking the cruise ship, then they must follow the requirements of the attestation prior to embarking the ship.

## Non-cruise ship crew:

### Self-quarantine Requirements

- Mariners who are embarking the ship the same day they arrive in the United States, must either:
  - Self-quarantine in a single-occupancy cabin with a private bathroom for at least 7 days after arriving in the U.S., or
  - Maintain a “working” quarantine on board the ship for at least 7 days after arriving in the U.S.
    - Please see [CDC’s Interim Guidance for Ships on Managing Suspected or Confirmed Cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) for additional information regarding “working” quarantines.
- Mariners who are *not* embarking the ship the day they arrive in the United States must self-quarantine for 7 days in shoreside accommodations (i.e., a hotel room).
  - Mariners who *will board the ship before the 7-day self-quarantine period* is completed must quarantine in their hotel until boarding the ship. Once onboard, these mariners must follow the one of the quarantine options outlined above for the remainder of their quarantine period.

### Testing Requirements

- Mariners must get tested with a [viral test](#) 3-5 days after arrival in the U.S. Non-cruise ship operators and mariners have several options to fulfill this requirement:
  - Crew can visit a shoreside testing facility (e.g., testing at a pharmacy or healthcare facility)
  - Operators can contract a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to preform testing onboard
  - Operators can provide crew with COVID-19 self-tests (sometimes referred to as home tests or at-home tests) or ask that crew embark the vessel with their own self-test.
    - CDC recommends that if self-tests are used, they should be conducted under supervision of tele-medicine personnel.

### Self-isolation Requirements

All mariners whose post-arrival test is positive for COVID-19 or who develop COVID-19 symptoms must self-isolate until criteria are met for discontinuation of isolation according to the most current CDC guidance. Those who recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days should consult with a healthcare provider for testing recommendations.

12. *Specifically, these questions relate to the post-arrival in the U.S. requirement for a COVID-19 test within 3-5 days – as well as a companion requirement which I do not believe was discussed on our call, which is a requirement for “Self-quarantine for a full 7 days, even if the test result to the post-arrival test is negative, unless you have documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days.” How would these two post-arrival requirements work for mariners who are going to immediately board container cargo and other ships (other than cruise ships/large passenger vessels)?*

Please see the response above.



## 11/10/21 Update

13. CDC advises that they inadvertently narrowed the sea crew exception by including language that the purpose of travel was to operate a vessel departing from a US seaport. This excluded mariners transiting the United States to operate a vessel departing in another country, which was not the intent.

Today CDC updated their Technical Instructions and FAQs to indicate that the sea crew exception also applies to crew members transiting the United States to operate a vessel departing from another country.

The updated language can be found in:

- Technical Instructions: [https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/order-safe-travel/technical-instructions.html#anchor\\_1635182986972](https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/order-safe-travel/technical-instructions.html#anchor_1635182986972)

### **Sea crew member traveling pursuant to a C-1 and D nonimmigrant visa**

Airlines and aircraft operators must confirm that any *Covered Individual* claiming this exception is traveling under the appropriate nonimmigrant visa and has an official letter (paper or digital) from their employer indicating that their entry to or transit through the United States is required for the purpose of operating a vessel.

- FAQs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/proof-of-vaccination.html#faq-exceptions>
  - **What documentation do I need if I am a sea crew member traveling with a C-1 and D nonimmigrant visa?**

You will need to show

- Your C-1 and D visa; AND
  - An official letter from your employer (paper or digital) indicating your entry to or transit through the United States is required for the purpose of operating a vessel.
- Please note there is a second FAQ in the same section that advises sea crew who are not fully vaccinated how they can fulfill the post-arrival requirements of the attestation.

Refer to answer # 11 above for details (*the blue-highlighted text was inserted today to match the FAQ*).