

Mobility: immigration alert

June 2021

Canada

Canadian government begins to ease travel restrictions in July 2021

Executive summary

On Wednesday, 9 June 2021, the Canadian Health Minister Patty Hajdu announced that in the coming weeks, the Canadian government will be implementing a phased approach towards reducing some of the current border measures and restrictions that are in place to protect against the spread of COVID-19 in Canada. In her announcement, Minister Hajdu stated that as part of the first phase, expected to be rolled out in early July 2021, fully vaccinated individuals who are currently permitted to enter Canada, will be able to do so without the requirement to stay in a Government Authorized Accommodation (GAA). Travellers will be required to be fully vaccinated 14 days or more prior to their arrival in Canada. Furthermore, a fully vaccinated person arriving in Canada will also be able to forego the full 14-day quarantine period once they receive a negative result from the COVID-19 PCR test that they are required to undertake upon arrival in Canada.

Background and analysis

Currently, unless otherwise exempted, international travelers arriving in Canada are required to quarantine for 14-days upon arrival. Additionally, international air travelers have been required to reserve, prior to them departing to Canada, a three-night quarantine stay in a GAA immediately upon arrival in Canada. Travelers are required to complete a PCR COVID-19 test upon entry, and once a negative result is received, are currently able to relocate to their quarantine location of choice for the

remainder of the 14-day mandatory quarantine period. With the June 9 announcement, much of this will be changing.

What this means

While the details are yet to be finalized, the government announcement regarding their plans to implement these changes in early July will have two important implications:

- ▶ Elimination of the mandatory three-night GAA hotel stay for Canadian citizens, Permanent Residents and temporary workers who are fully vaccinated. "Fully vaccinated" means that the person has completed both doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine (or the single dose if it is the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) at least two weeks prior to arriving in Canada.
- ▶ Reduction of the 14-day quarantine for those eligible travelers who receive a negative result from the PCR COVID test that is required upon arrival in Canada.

All other quarantine measures and travel restrictions will remain in effect during this phase. Specifically, eligible travellers will still be required to have a negative pre-departure PCR COVID-19 test result within 72 hours of entry into Canada. Further, travellers will also still be tested upon arrival, and require a suitable quarantine plan to wait for their day one "upon arrival" test result.

The government will continue to monitor changes in case numbers nationally, as well as vaccination rates, to continue the phased approach in adjusting current border measures.



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Recommendations

It is advisable that employers review these changes for applicability to employees and ensure that those entering Canada are eligible to do so based on the current travel restrictions still in place. Non-essential travel to Canada by foreign nationals, such as business visits or tourism, is still not permitted during this first phase of the easing of restrictions. Employers must ensure that eligible essential workers who are fully vaccinated still come prepared with a quarantine plan and complete all other pre-arrival requirements including pre-departure testing.

For further details on the above, please consult a qualified immigration professional or reach out to your EY contact to review implications of this update and case specific assessments.

We will continue to monitor and review future developments. For additional information, or if you wish to discuss further, please contact your EY Law LLP professional.

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