



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte
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To: Chief Executive Officer
Each National Director
Each Assistant National Director HR
Each Assistant Chief Finance Officer
Each Hospital Group CEO
Each Hospital Group Director of HR
Each Chief Officer CHOs
Each Head of HR CHOs
Head of HR, PCRS
Each CEO Section 38 Agencies
Each HR Manager Section 38 Agencies
Each Employee Relations Manager
Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery
Each Group Director of Midwifery
Each Clinical Director
Director National Ambulance Service

From: Anne Marie Hoey National Director Human Resources

Date: 15th June 2021

Re: HR Circular 022/2021 Arrangements for health service employees in relation to travel overseas

*Please note this circular replaces the provisions set out in **HSE HR Circular 072/2020 and Section 12 of HSE HR Circular 15/2021.***

Dear Colleagues

1. Government travel advice

Government advice to avoid non-essential travel and related penalties remains in place until 18 July. From 19 July, subject to the prevailing public health situation,

Ireland will operate the EU Digital COVID Certificate (DCC) for travel originating within the EU/EEA.

Under the current situation the following applies:

There is a Government Advisory in operation against all non-essential international travel. Travel restrictions are in place to protect public health and to mitigate the risk of new variants of COVID-19 entering the country.

With effect from 4 February 2021, a legal requirement to quarantine has been introduced for all travellers (except where the individual's journey originates in Northern Ireland) with very limited exemptions. Further details are available at this [link](#). Additional requirements were agreed in respect of Category 2 countries ("Designated States").

2. Arrival in Ireland from non-designated states

Anyone coming into Ireland (including those arriving from outside the Common Travel Area into Northern Ireland) is required to be in receipt of a negative or 'not detected' result from a pre-departure COVID-19 Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test carried out no more than 72 hours before the individual's arrival (or have evidence that s/he is exempt from this legal requirement), complete a COVID 19 Passenger Locator Form and quarantine for 14 days at the address specified on the Passenger Locator Form. The quarantine period can finish earlier if the individual obtains a negative PCR test result taken no less than 5 days after arrival in the State. The individual must retain written confirmation of the test result for at least 14 days. *Please see section 4 below for provisions for HSE employees regarding return to work on-site.*

It is an offence not to fulfil the legal requirement for mandatory quarantine as set out above. Further information can be found [here](#).

3. Designated states: Mandatory Hotel Quarantine

Arrivals from designated states are required to be in receipt of a pre-departure negative PCR test, complete a passenger locator form and are subject to mandatory hotel quarantine. This must be pre-booked in advance of travel.

Any passenger who has been in any of the designated states in the previous 14 days, even if only transiting through one of these countries and even if remaining airside, is legally required to quarantine at a designated facility (mandatory hotel quarantine) on arrival in Ireland. The period of quarantine is 14 days, beginning on the day of admission to the designated facility (the hotel).

However, the Health (Amendment) Act 2021 provides that this period of quarantine will end early, on receipt of a negative ('not detected') result following an RT-PCR

test taken on day 10 of quarantine. If a person in these circumstances tests positive during quarantine, a further period of quarantine is required. For further information, please see the Government of Ireland website gov.ie. HSE employees returning from designated states cannot return to work on-site until the 14 days post travel quarantine has been completed (see section 4 below).

Individuals who are fully vaccinated with an approved vaccine and have documentary proof, do not have to complete mandatory hotel quarantine on arrival in Ireland. Even if an individual is fully vaccinated, s/he will still require receipt of a negative ('not detected') RT-PCR test for COVID-19 taken in the 72 hours before arrival in Ireland and must also complete a period of self-quarantine at home or in the place specified in the passenger locator form. Further information is set out [here](#). HSE employees who are fully vaccinated with an approved vaccine and who return from a designated state cannot return to work on-site until the 14 days post travel quarantine has been completed (see section 4 below).

It is important to note that the list of designated states will be subject to change at short notice and passengers are required to check the list before travelling to Ireland, to be sure of their obligations. The list of designated states can be found [here](#).

4. HSE employees who return from travel overseas¹

In relation to HSE employees who return from travel overseas, HSE managers should refer to the following updated HSE Occupational Health Guideline documents:

- Interim Guidance for Coronavirus – Healthcare Worker Management by Occupational Health version.
- Derogation for the Return to Work of Healthcare Workers (HCW) who are essential for Critical Services.

The updated HSE Occupational Health guidelines are available at this [link](#).

As of 10th May 2021, in accordance with the provisions set out in these HSE Occupational Health guidelines, HSE employees who travel from non-designated states and receive a negative PCR test result no less than 5 days after their arrival are no longer required by the HSE to remain away from the work premises until the 14 day period² has ended, provided Government advice is adhered to.

HSE employees returning from a designated state(s) cannot return to work on-site until the 14 days post travel quarantine has been completed. This requirement also

¹ This is specific to HSE employees. Section 38 employers may put in place their own additional measures in respect of their employees.

² The additional measures for HSE employees who return from travel overseas and who normally attend the work premises, which have now been removed, were set out in Section 12.4 of HSE HR Circular 15/2021 linked [here](#).

applies to HSE employees who have been fully vaccinated and who return from a designated state(s). As this is a precautionary measure that goes beyond the current Government advice HSE management must assign the employee work that can be carried out at home (WFH) for the intervening period until the 14 day period has expired. This may include assigning duties outside the HSE employee's normal role.

Please note that this WFH arrangement only applies from the date the employee receives the negative PCR test result (which brings the quarantine period to an end as per the Government website criteria) and covers the remaining period up to 14 days that the employee is required by HSE management to remain away from the work premises. Any period of quarantine that HSE employees are required to undertake upon arrival in Ireland, as per current Government advice, must be covered by annual leave or unpaid leave.

5. Employee Responsibilities

Employees should be aware of the testing and quarantine requirements in place at the time of travel, both for their intended destination and on return to Ireland. Responsibility to provide for the period of quarantine arising from travel overseas is a matter for each individual employee unless they fall into the very limited exemption categories as outlined here.

In order to protect public health, employees are required to advise their employer of any intention to travel overseas. Where there is an intention to undertake travel overseas, all employees must make provision by way of an annual leave or unpaid leave application (which may include parental leave where eligible) to cover any requirement for a period of quarantine that may be in place upon arrival in Ireland. This arrangement is applicable to all public health service employees regardless of whether they can work from home. The employee's leave application must be approved by the manager in advance and a record retained.

As set out above, employees should be aware that whatever quarantine requirements are in place on their date of return to Ireland will apply to them. Employees should be advised to log on to www.dfa.ie immediately prior to their return to Ireland to ensure they are fully apprised of the current Government advice, provide evidence of a negative/ 'not detected' result from a pre-departure COVID-19 RT-PCR test carried out no more than 72 hours before the individual's arrival (or have evidence that s/he is exempt from this legal requirement) and any necessary requirement to quarantine upon arrival in Ireland.

Queries

Queries from individual employees or managers should be referred to local HR/Employee Relations Departments. Please note that the National HR Helpdesk is also available to take queries from employees Tel: 1850 444 925 Email: ask.hr@hse.ie

Queries from HR/Employee Relations Departments on this memorandum may be referred to National Employee Relations, HR Directorate, 63-64 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2 Tel: 01 6626966 Email: info.t@hse.ie

Yours sincerely



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National Director of Human Resources