

April 19, 2021

## **Travel Advisory Update: Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: Why does the State Department have a Travel Advisory system?**

A: The Department of State has no greater responsibility than the safety and security of U.S. citizens overseas. We provide U.S. citizens with safety and security information through our Consular Information Program products, which include Travel Advisories, Alerts, and country information pages. Every country is assigned an overall Travel Advisory Level, from 1-4. Our Travel Advisory levels are based on established risk indicators such as health, crime, terrorism, kidnapping or hostage taking, civil unrest, natural disasters, and other potential risks. Each country's level is based on our current assessment of conditions in-country that might affect the welfare or safety of U.S. citizens in that country.

**Q: Why is the State Department updating their Travel Advisory system?**

A: In March 2021, we updated the COVID-19 framework used to assign COVID-19 Travel Advisory levels to be based primarily on CDC's science-based data points. We

also take into account testing availability in-country and travel prohibitions for U.S. citizens.

**Q: How can U.S. citizens stay up-to-date on evolving situations abroad?**

A: We encourage U.S. citizens to stay connected with us via [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov), on social media @travelgov on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram social media accounts, and through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at [step.state.gov](https://step.state.gov) to receive timely Alerts about evolving health and safety conditions for any country, or countries, of interest. Additionally, our Embassies and Consulates maintain country-specific COVID-19 information pages, which provide detailed information about conditions and impacts related to COVID-19. For a link to these pages, please visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html>

**Q: How many Travel Advisories increased to Level 4 Do Not Travel?**

A: After this update, approximately 80% of countries will have a Travel Advisory Level of 4: Do Not Travel. This does not necessarily indicate a change to the current health situation in a given country. It reflects an adjustment

in our system to give more weight to CDC's existing assessments. We continue to strongly recommend U.S. citizens reconsider **all** travel abroad, and postpone their trips if possible. For the latest Travel Advisory Levels see our website at [travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html).

**Q: Why is [X] country now a [Y] level, especially if it was [Z] level before the pandemic?**

A: The COVID-19 pandemic poses unprecedented risks for travelers, and our destination-specific advisories take into account the latest data and public health and safety analysis on related risks. Many of our Travel Advisory levels have changed as a result of CDC's Travel Health Notice levels. We also consider the strategies other countries have put in place to respond to the pandemic, including restrictions on U.S. citizen entry. In those situations, our Travel Advisory would advise U.S. citizens 'Do Not Travel' to avoid becoming stranded overseas. As conditions evolve, we regularly update our advice to U.S. travelers.

**Q: How often do you reassess each country's Travel Advisory level?**

A: We work closely with CDC to obtain their latest Travel Health Notification information and routinely review safety and security conditions in destinations across the world. We update destination-specific information when appropriate.

**Q: With vaccines being distributed shouldn't Travel Advisory levels be going down, not up?**

A: Travel Advisory levels take into account several factors, including public health indicators, access to medical care, crime, entry and exit requirements, and the ability of the U.S. government to assist in an emergency. The combination of these factors, according to the adjustment of our system, has led to changes in a number of Travel Advisory levels.

As travelers face ongoing risks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have updated our Travel Advisories to better reflect the CDC's science-based Travel Health Notices. We also considered logistical factors, including in-country testing availability and current travel restrictions for U.S. citizens.

**Q: Why is [X] country a [Y] level, given CDC has it at [Z] level? Are State's Travel Advisories all going to match the CDC's?**

A: The CDC's Travel Health Notices focus exclusively on health-related concerns, while the Department of State's Travel Advisories are based on a broader set of risk indicators. This means that in some instances, the Department's Travel Advisory for a given country will reflect a different level than the CDC's notice for that country. We encourage travelers to review both the CDC's website for more information about their Travel Health Notices at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices#travel-notice-definitions> and [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) for more detailed information about the Department of State's Travel Advisories.

**Q: Are U.S. citizens prohibited from traveling to a country with a Level 4 Travel Advisory?**

A: We continue to strongly recommend U.S. citizens reconsider **all** travel abroad, and postpone their trips if possible.

The State Department advises against travel to countries with a Level 4 Travel Advisory as a matter of safety and security. If a U.S. citizen decides to travel there anyway, we strongly urge them to read our information on high-risk travel at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/high-risk-travelers.html>, enroll in our [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#), and follow our advice on how to

prepare. In our travel information, we warn people not to visit certain high-risk countries and areas both because of local conditions and because we are limited in our ability to provide consular services in those places.

**Q: Some U.S. citizens are traveling internationally again. Will they be subjected to a 14-day quarantine upon their return to the U.S.? What if they go to countries newly designated Level 2 or 3?**

A: We continue to strongly recommend U.S. citizens reconsider **all** travel abroad, and postpone their trips if possible.

We remind travelers that all air passengers two years of age or older arriving to the United States must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test no more than three days before departing or proof of recovery from COVID-19 before boarding (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html>). This order applies to both foreign nationals and U.S. citizens.

We refer you to the Department of Homeland Security and the CDC for questions regarding admission into the U.S. and any quarantine requirements. [off the record, you might find the following page helpful: <https://www.dhs.gov/coronavirus/protecting-air-travelers-and-american-public>].

