

Canadian COVID-19 Testing Requirements at Land Borders



By [Elizabeth M. Klarin](#)

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Various media outlets in Canada are reporting that starting February 15, 2021, Canada will require advance COVID testing and negative results for anyone arriving in Canada via one of its many land borders. The reports follow comments made by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Ottawa on Tuesday.

While Canadians will still be allowed to enter Canada without negative test results via a land border, they could face “severe penalties” for not complying with the COVID testing requirements, according to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau—including a fine of up to \$3,000. Trudeau admitted that “it’s not legal to refuse entry to a Canadian who wants to come home.”

Passengers can be prevented from travel to Canada by air, as the airlines (rather than a Canadian government official) can prevent passengers from boarding without negative COVID test results while they are still on foreign soil. However, at the land border, it would have to be a government official refusing the individual entry, while the individual is technically within the boundaries of Canada.

Specifically calling out Canadian snowbirds, Trudeau emphasized that “people who show up at a Canadian land border on nonessential travel—like returning snowbirds—will be required to show a negative COVID-19 test.” Government officials have suggested that truckers would not be subject to the COVID testing requirements, to prevent harm to channels of trade including supply chains, essential services and critical infrastructure.

Since January 7th, proof of a negative COVID-19 laboratory test result has been required in order to board any plane for a flight to Canada. The test must be conducted within 72 hours of the traveler’s scheduled time of departure to Canada, and must have been performed using a COVID-19 molecular test, such as a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or Loop-mediated Isothermal Amplification (LAMP) test. We anticipate the same testing requirements for land border entries, starting on the 15th, as well as possible additional measures such as follow-up testing on arrival in Canada, mandatory hotel stay while they await results of the arrival test, and additional quarantine and follow-up even in the case of negative results.

Please watch the Government of Canada’s [Transport Canada website](#) in the coming days for updated information, as changes are announced.

Related Team



Elizabeth M. Klarin
Partner



**Nisha V. Fontaine
(Jagtiani)**
Partner



Eileen M. Martin
Partner | Team Co-
Leader - Immigration
| Team Leader -
Canada-U.S. Cross
Border



Andrew M. Wilson
Partner | Chief
Advisory Officer |
Team Co-Leader -
Immigration

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