

U.S. to Remove COVID Vaccine Requirement for International Travelers



Immigration Blog

By [Elizabeth M. Klarin](#)

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Non-U.S. travelers coming to the U.S. will no longer be required to prove that they have the COVID-19 vaccination in order to enter the U.S., starting at 12:01 a.m. on May 12, 2023, the [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) announced Monday](#). This announcement follows the [Biden administration's announcement](#) that it will terminate its Presidential Proclamation restricting air travel to those fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

“Beginning May 12, 2023, DHS will no longer require non-U.S. travelers entering the United States via land ports of entry and ferry terminals to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and provide related proof of vaccination upon request,” the agency said in a statement.

One has to wonder how much (and how aggressive was the) pushback the government received on its [April 21, 2023 announcement](#) that it would be extending temporary rules requiring non-U.S. travelers entering the United States via land ports of entry and ferry terminals at the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and provide related proof of vaccination upon request. In a world where everything related to the

U.S. government seems to happen at a snail's pace, this is a pretty swift change of tack. In the immigration world, we were all left scratching our heads at that one. So... the pandemic was officially ended on April 10, 2023 when President Biden signed into law H.J. Res. 7, which officially terminated the national emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic by an act of Congress, but pandemic-related travel restrictions need to remain in place indefinitely? Now it appears that this was a stop-gap measure to align the Biden administration's preferred May 11, 2023 "end date" for pandemic-related requirements with DHS policy at the border. As of its most recent update on April 19, 2023, even the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has admitted that COVID-19 vaccines do not prevent the illness (see "Why should I get vaccinated if I might get COVID-19 anyway?" on the CDC website [here](#)).

This is welcome news to the thousands upon thousands of international travelers to the U.S. who have chosen not to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine, despite government pressure from nations around the world to do so over the past three years. However, the COVID-19 vaccine requirement remains in place—for the time being—for intending immigrants (i.e., those who wish to obtain permanent residence) to the U.S. Until this policy is aligned with the reality that the COVID-19 vaccine does not prevent the disease, intending immigrants will continue to need to apply for waivers of the ground of inadmissibility applicable to them for not having a vaccination against all proscribed U.S. federally recognized 'vaccine-preventable diseases'—which [continues to include COVID-19](#) as of the date of publication of this blog post.

For updates on this and other critical immigration topics, please check back with this blog frequently. If you require support for immigration-related waivers of inadmissibility due to not having received the COVID-19 vaccine, please reach out to Partner [Elizabeth Klarin](#) or any of the immigration professionals on [Lippes Mathias's immigration team](#).

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