

Federal government dropping COVID-19 travel restrictions

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Starting next month, travellers entering Canada will no longer need to show proof of vaccination or be required to wear masks on planes and trains, as the federal government announces it will be dropping all COVID-19 entry restrictions.

Effective Oct. 1, all travellers, regardless of citizenship, will no longer have to submit public health information through ArriveCAN, provide proof of vaccination, undergo pre or on-arrival testing, or carry out COVID-19 related isolation or quarantine.

Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos on Monday (Sept. 26), said Canada is in a "much better position" than it was earlier in the pandemic when restrictions were put in play.

The federal government said the border measures have been lifted due to a number of factors including; modelling indicating that Canada has largely passed the peak of the Omicron BA. 4 and BA. 5 waves; high vaccination rates; lower hospitalization and death rates; and the availability of vaccine boosters.

The lifting of the entry restrictions will also apply to cruises where passenger will no longer be required to have pre-board tests, be vaccination or use ArriveCAN.

The federal government said a set of guidelines will remain to protect passengers and crew, which will align with the approach used by the U.S.

Transport Canada is also removing existing travel requirements as of Oct. 1 including undergoing health checks for travel on air and rail and wearing a mask on planes and trains.

"We've always maintained that the extraordinary measures we introduced at our borders and on airplanes, trains and boats were temporary and that we would adjust them as the situation changes," said Omar Alghabra, Transport Minister. "We've all worked together to follow the guidelines, get vaccinated and protect one another and now we're taking another step to returning to the normal travel that connects families, workers, and our communities."

While mask mandates have been lifted, officials said travellers are still "strongly recommended" to wear masks during their journey.

Travellers are also reminded they should not to travel if they have symptoms of COVID-19. Those that become sick while travelling should inform a flight attendant, cruise staff or boarder services officer when they arrive in Canada as they may be referred to a quarantine officer.

The federal government also noted that restrictions could be re-established in the future if need be.