

Frequently asked questions about negative pre-departure PCR test requirement for incoming travelers

January 5, 2021

Who is required to provide proof of pre-departure negative COVID-19 test result?

All travelers arriving to the Republic of Korea from another country are required to submit proof of negative PCR test result issued prior to departure, effective January 8 for airport arrivals and January 15 for seaport arrivals.

Does this test result document need to be in Korean?

The document must be written in Korean or English.

Documents issued in languages other than Korean or English need to be submitted along with certified Korean or English translation and a document certifying or notarizing the translation.

Which COVID-19 tests are accepted?

The test must be a real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) test, which is a test detecting viral nucleic acid in the test sample.

When does the test need to be issued?

The test result needs to be issued within 72 hours of the date of departure.

For example, if your flight departs on January 10, the test must be issued on or after January 7.

If my itinerary includes one or more connecting flights, where does my test result need to be issued? *(e.g. if I depart from Country A, stop in Country B, and arrive in Korea, should I be tested in Country A, B, or both?)*

Your test must be issued in the country that you last entered before arriving in Korea.

For example, if you transferred to your connecting flight without entering Country B, your test result needs to be issued in Country A.

If you entered Country B before arriving in Korea, your test result needs to be issued in Country B.

If my itinerary includes connection through Korea but my final destination is another country, do I need to submit the negative test result to Korea?

The document is required if you enter Korea before leaving for your final destination. You will not be required to submit this document to Korean officials if you do not enter Korea while in transit.

Are test results issued online or received via email accepted?

Test results issued online must be printed prior to departure, so that a physical copy can be handed to the public health officials for review by the National Quarantine Station.

The document must include your name (identical to the name on your passport), name of the test, result of the test, and the date issued.

What happens if I arrive in Korea without a negative test result document?

Foreign nationals who arrive without a negative test result will be denied entry. This is common practice in most countries that have this requirement.

Korean nationals who arrive without a negative test result may be allowed entry. In this case, they will be required to undergo 2-week quarantine at a facility and will be charged for the use of the facility (KRW 1.68 million per person).

Are aircraft crew members also required to submit a negative test result?

Flight crew members are currently exempt from the requirement. This may change in the future depending on changing risks abroad.

Are holders of A visas also required to submit a negative test result?

A-1 (diplomatic), A-2 (government official on duty), and A-3 (treaties) visa holders are subject to the same requirement.

Does this requirement also apply to toddlers and infants?

Although this requirement applies to all persons of all ages including toddlers and infants,

children under 6 years of age (at the time of entry) may be allowed entry without a pre-departure test result.

If the parent or guardian of the child shows suspected symptoms at the time of entry, both the parent/guardian and the child will be required to get tested for COVID-19 at the border.

Which institution do I need to get the test result issued by? Is there a list of preapproved institutions that can issue this document?

For persons arriving from one of the countries currently listed as countries subject to strengthened infectious disease control measures (other than the UK and South Africa), the document needs to be issued by one of the designated testing institutions.

For persons who departed from Russia and arriving through a sea port, the document needs to be issued by a designated testing institution in Russia.

For other countries, there is no list of designated institutions.

Does this requirement also apply to businesspersons entering through the Fast Track Procedure?

Persons who qualify for the Fast Track Procedure are subject to the same requirement and will need to submit proof of negative PCR test result issued within 72 hours of the date of departure.