



GOVERNMENT OF TONGA

MEDIA RELEASE

(30th September, 2022)

“Open Border Policy Framework for Tonga (Updated 27/9/2022)”

1. **Tonga opened its borders on 1st August, 2022** and its progressive Open Border Policy Framework is constantly being monitored for review based on the evolving COVID-19 situation both in Tonga and surrounding countries. A review of the Open Border Policy Framework on 19th of September 2022, confirmed the following situations:
 - a. Number of COVID-19 cases have remained low at single digit confirming that the second wave of the COVID-19 outbreak has truly passed;
 - b. Above observation (i) aligns with the pattern of the COVID-19 pandemic, both regionally and globally, and continues to be such even with the cancellation of the Mandatory Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) requirement since 1st of August 2022 for fully vaccinated travelers;
 - c. Severe adverse events following COVID-19 infection, including mortality, has remained low at 12 deaths since the first wave;
 - d. Health system within Tonga has not been significantly affected;
 - e. Transmission, pressure on health systems, vaccination of population and capacity of health systems are now within the parameters of the Green Color of the COVID-19 National Traffic Light Framework;
2. Based on the above situations, the following changes will come into effect on Tuesday 27th of September 2022:
 - i. The number of incoming flights to Tonga approved will be at the discretion of the airlines subject to approval by Civil Aviation. No further health order will be required for flight;
 - ii. Tongan travelers * with valid Tongan Passport or Certificate of Identity will no longer be required to show any COVID-19 vaccination certificate in order to enter Tonga;
 - iii. Foreign Travelers with valid Foreign Passport, Certificate of Identity, Tongan Protected Passport or Tongan National Passport above 12 years of age will still be required to have an official/legitimate COVID-19 vaccination certificate to be shown at check-in before boarding a flight to Tonga;
 - iv. Travel insurance is advisable for foreign travelers. This can be purchased when booking your ticket.
 - v. Foreign travelers with medical conditions that deem themselves exempt from Vaccination must email travel@health.gov.to at least 48 hours before departure with a written report from a registered medical officer stating reasons for exemptions.

The Ministry of Health reserves the right to deny boarding if it is not satisfied with the medical report provided.

All travelers are still encouraged to have full vaccination with booster dose completed before traveling to Tonga.

3. Testing Requirement:

- i. Supervised Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) prior to departure to Tonga is **NO longer required** for passengers traveling to Tonga;
- ii. Transit passengers do **NOT** need to do any Supervised Rapid Antigen Test (RAT).

4. On Arrival into TONGA:

- a. All arriving passengers are still encouraged to adhere to the advised preventative measures and wear a facial mask in public places, social distance as possible and practice hand hygiene. These are especially encouraged at the following places: retail shops, workplaces, social gatherings, public transportation and depots, educational institutions, churches and similar places of public gatherings.
- b. The public including travelers will need to follow specific requirements, which may be implemented by owners of various businesses/workplaces, according to their own Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs);
- c. Ministry of Health facilities will still require clients attending with signs and symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 to be tested for COVID-19;
- d. All passengers are to fill in the Health Arrival Declaration Form inflight before arrival. These Health Arrival Declaration Forms must be made available by the respective airline for incoming passengers;
- e. Any arriving passenger who tests Positive for COVID-19 must still self/home isolate for 5 days from the date of testing Positive. If the passenger is still symptomatic, self/home isolation will be extended for another 3 days. Recovering passengers must wear a mask for the next 5 days upon release.

The Ministry of Health appreciates your full cooperation and patience. We look forward to your continued support and trust you will help so that we can continue to keep Tonga safe.

"The following persons shall be deemed to be Tongan subjects -

- *(a) any person born in Tonga to a Tongan parent;*
- *(b) any person born abroad of a Tongan father*
- *(c) any person born abroad of a Tongan mother*
- *(d) any non-Tongan who marries a Tongan provided that he -*
 - *(i) lodges a written declaration with the Minister of Foreign Affairs that he wishes to assume Tongan nationality; and*
 - *(ii) takes the oath of allegiance prescribed by this Act ; and*
- *(e) any person naturalized under this Act.*

However it is important to note that any person under section 2 of the Nationality Act, must still register their foreign births here in Tonga under the Tonga as per Regulation 7 of the

Registrar General's Births, Deaths and Marriages Regulations (accessible - https://ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/SUBORDINATE/1702/1702-0002/RegistrarGeneralsBirthsDeathsandMarriagesRegulations_3.pdf) . The registration of their foreign births in Tonga will allow them to have a Tongan passport and be recognized as a "Tongan".

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