Covid-19 Operational Guidelines and latest updates

Working to keep our staff, clients and guests safe

Wallace Travel Group COVID-19 Protocols and Operational Guidelines

(Updated on the 5th October 2021)

Wallace Travel Group complies with Failte Ireland Incoming Irish Tour Operator Guidelines to Safe Re-opening, for detailed information please visit:

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-opening-Incoming-Tour-Operators.pdf

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Update
Latest statistics as at 1 October

The number of COVID-19 infections is currently almost 233.6 million worldwide, according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University. Global deaths attributed to COVID-19 are now more than 4.7 million.

According to the WHO, weekly global COVID-19 cases and deaths continued to decline during the week of 20-26 September 2021. Over 3.3 million new cases and over 55,000 new deaths were reported, decreases of 10% compared to the previous week for both cases and deaths. The largest decrease in new weekly cases was reported from the Eastern Mediterranean Region (17%), followed by the Western Pacific Region (15%), the Region of the Americas (14%), the African Region (12%) and the South-East Asia Region (10%); while weekly cases in the European Region remained similar to the previous week.

Ireland's economic recovery is expected to be more rapid than initially predicted, with official forecasts for economic growth sharply upgraded for this year. GDP is now expected to grow by 15.6% in 2021, with an expected 5.25% rise in the domestic economy – double the earlier growth forecast made in the summer.

Island of Ireland Update

In Northern Ireland, fully vaccinated travellers will no longer have to take a pre-departure test when arriving from non-red list countries from 4 October.

In Ireland, mandatory hotel quarantine for those travelling from designated countries has ended. People arriving in Ireland without proof of vaccination, or a negative PCR test, will be required to quarantine at home.

Ireland has extended the EU Digital COVID Certificate service to Irish passport holders who were vaccinated outside the EU, starting with Northern Ireland. More than 4 million certificates have already been issued in Ireland.

Ireland's first nightclub reopening test event took place on 30 September with antigen testing, contact tracing and vaccine passports required for entry to the venue, which allowed 450 participants from 8:30pm to 12:30am. Meanwhile, Hospitality Ulster has called on the Northern Ireland Executive to allow the reopening of nightclubs and to ease further restrictions.

Discussions on the issue of introducing vaccine certificates for access to hospitality and other services in Northern Ireland are ongoing, with the Health Minister saying the system would take six to eight weeks to develop if approved. Scotland and Wales are introducing vaccine certification schemes in October, while authorities in England have cancelled plans to introduce them.

Vaccines, Vaccinations & Variants

Globally, more than 6.2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to date.

In Northern Ireland, almost 81% of people aged 16+ are fully vaccinate and 88% have received one dose.

In Ireland, almost 92% of adults are fully vaccinated – the highest rate in the EU. Almost 91% of those aged 12+ have received at least 1 vaccine dose.

Ireland is one of a small number of countries who has fully vaccinated more than two-thirds of its population against COVID-19, with 73% of its total population having now received two doses of vaccine. The UK (including Northern Ireland) has fully vaccinated more than 66%. Canada has at least 70%, Italy 67%, Belgium 71% and Spain 77% with Portugal having at least 84% of its total population fully vaccinated.

Bloomberg's latest Covid Resilience Ranking has named Ireland as the best country to be in as the world learns to live through the coronavirus pandemic. The report noted a "startling turnaround" and recognised Ireland's national vaccination rates as among the highest globally.

The EU will extend its mechanism to monitor and potentially limit the export of COVID-19 vaccines from the bloc.

Update on International Travel, Tourism & Vaccine Passports

The US is currently strongly advising against travel to Ireland and 11 countries in the EU and Schengen area. It has yet to reveal details of its plan to reopen for vaccinated international travellers from 33 countries in early November.

The UK government has appointed a group of business leaders from the hospitality sector - including Nando's, Starbucks and Prezzo - to advise it on its plans to boost the hospitality sector after the easing of lockdown restrictions.

Update on Global Access Situation, Airlines & Airports

Global capacity is slightly higher this week than last week, with an additional 180,000 seats in the market, bringing capacity back up to 79 million seats. However, according to OAG, the month of September ends with capacity 2% below August 2021, 31% below September 2019 but 38% up on September 2020.

Over the past week, airlines have reduced capacity in their schedules by 1% for October to December, the equivalent of 11.8 million seats globally. 5.3 million have been removed for October, 5.9 million for November and 0.7 million in the December schedule.

AVIA Solutions expects that global air traffic recovery will not be uniform across all market segments. The business travel segment is likely to recover more slowly (especially to the US), and significantly behind leisure travel (both short and long-haul). The company estimates that passenger traffic volumes would return to pre-pandemic levels between 2023-2025, dependent on region and traffic type. However, it is not expected that the same mix of passenger traffic will return as volume returns (business vs leisure, international vs domestic, low cost carriers vs full service).

Ryanair is restoring its two-aircraft base at Cork Airport from December, with 12 routes for the winter and 20 routes operating for summer 2022. Pre-pandemic, Ryanair carried 1.14m passengers on 24 routes out of Cork.

Vueling, the Spanish low-cost carrier, will begin flying from Cork and Dublin airports to Paris Orly this winter.

Aer Lingus has announced that it will increase its services from Belfast City airport to London Heathrow (21 flights a week), Manchester (twice daily), and Edinburgh (11 flights a week).

United Airlines is preparing to dismiss more than 300 employees who have not got vaccinated after the carrier brought in a vaccination policy in early August 2021. It was the first US carrier to require COVID-19 vaccinations for all domestic employees. The airline plans to hire about 25,000 people over the next few years, and vaccination will be a condition of employment for all new hires.

The next steps in reopening and lifting the restrictions

Oct 22

Most remaining restrictions to be eased including:
- requirements for physical distancing
- requirements for mask wearing outdoors and in indoor private settings
- limits on numbers at indoor and outdoor events and activities
- restrictions on religious or civil ceremonies
- limits on numbers that can meet in private homes/gardens
- certification of vaccination, immunity or testing as a prerequisite for access to, or engagement in, any activities or events (with exception of international travel)
- restrictions on high-risk activities (nightclubs for example)

Measures that will remain in place include:
- self-isolation when we have symptoms
- mask wearing in healthcare settings, indoor retail and on public transport

General COVID-19 Travel Advisory to/from the Republic of Ireland in Operation

The latest government announcement on international travel, which indicates the approach from 19 July, 2021 onwards, subject to the prevailing public health situation, is available on www.gov.ie. Information on the operation of the EU Digital COVID Certificate is also available on www.gov.ie

You are advised to monitor the official advice and information provided by the authorities at your destination. In particular, you should inform yourself of any restrictions on arrival. Information about entry restrictions currently applied by other countries is available on our country-specific travel advice pages. Additional restrictions may be imposed by the country of your destination, including during your visit. Flight restrictions and route cancellations continue to occur worldwide and there is no guarantee that air routes will operate as scheduled.

Travelling to Ireland

If you are travelling to Ireland from overseas you must fill out a Passenger Locator Form before departure.

You also have to have appropriate valid proof of vaccination or recovery, or to present evidence of a negative RT-PCR result from a test taken within 72 hours prior to arrival into the country.

A relevant EU Digital COVID Certificate based on vaccination, recovery or a negative RT-PCR test constitutes valid proof.

Non RT-PCR tests are not accepted when travelling to Ireland and passengers with a Digital COVID Certificate based on a non RT-PCR test (for example, antigen tests) require proof of an additional negative RT-PCR test taken no more than 72 hours before arrival.

In situations where a person is required to present evidence of a negative/'not detected' RT-PCR test prior to travel, and is unable to do so due to persistently positive RT-PCR test after recovery, then a positive RT-PCR result will be acceptable which was taken no less than 11 days and no more than 180 days prior to arrival to the State

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Proof of Vaccination

A non-Digital COVID Certificate proof of vaccination means a record or evidence in written or electronic form in English or Irish or an official translation into Irish or English which contains the following:

- confirmation that the person to whom the record or evidence refers is a vaccinated person

- the date or dates on which the person was vaccinated

- the body in the state concerned implementing the vaccination programme (howsoever described) on behalf of the state that administered or caused to be administered the vaccination to the person concerned

- the HSE Vaccination Card is an example of acceptable non-Digital COVID Certificate proof of vaccination

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Approved Vaccines

For the purposes of travel, passengers are considered vaccinated if they have been vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the European Medicines Agency with recommended number of days after the final dose, see table below.

A full course of any one of the following vaccines:	Regarded as vaccinated after:
2 doses of Pfizer-BioNtech Vaccine: BNT162b2 (Comirnaty®)	7 days
2 doses of Moderna Vaccine: CX-024414 (Moderna®)	14 days
2 doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca Vaccine: ChAdOx1-SARS-COV-2 (Vaxzevria® or Covishield)	15 days

1 dose of Johnson & Johnson/Janssen Vaccine: Ad26.COV2-S [recombinant] (Janssen®)	14 days

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Proof of recovery – recovery certificates

A non-Digital COVID Certificate 'proof of recovery' means a record or evidence in written or electronic form in English or Irish or an official translation into Irish or English which contains the following:

- name

- date of birth

- disease from which holder has recovered

- date of holder's first positive NAAT test result

- Member State or third country in which test was carried out

- certificate issuer

- dates the certificate is valid from and valid until (not more than 180 days after the date of first positive NAAT test result)

Traveling with children

Children between the ages of 12 and 17 will be required to have a negative RT-PCR test taken within 72 hours prior to arrival to travel into the country, unless they have valid proof of vaccination or recovery.

Children of any age, travelling with accompanying vaccinated or recovered adults will not be required to self-quarantine post arrival. However, where one accompanying adult needs to self-quarantine, then all children must also self-quarantine.

Advice on travelling abroad is available on the Department of Foreign Affairs website.

Passengers arriving into Ireland who have not travelled outside the EU + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland within 14 days of arrival

Ireland is now a part of the EU Digital COVID Certificate for travel originating within the EU/EEA.

If you have valid proof of vaccination, no travel-related testing or quarantine will be necessary.

If you have valid proof that you have recovered from COVID-19 in the past 180 days, no travel-related testing or quarantine will be necessary.

If you do not have valid proof of vaccination or recovery, you will need to present evidence of a negative RT-PCR result from a test taken within 72 hours prior to arrival into the country. No further travel-related testing or quarantine will be necessary.

Travel restrictions for passengers arriving into Ireland from outside EU + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland

Please note: This includes those arriving from Great Britain.

If you are travelling to Ireland from abroad you must fill out a Passenger Locator Form before departure.

If you have valid proof of vaccination (see above), no travel-related testing or quarantine will be necessary.

If you have valid proof of recovery from COVID-19 in the past 180 days (see above), no travel-related testing or quarantine will be necessary.

If you do not have valid proof of vaccination or recovery, you will need to:

- present evidence of a negative result from a RT-PCR test taken within 72 hours prior to arrival into the country
- self-quarantine for 14 days

If you receive a negative result from a RT-PCR test taken from day 5 onwards after arrival into Ireland, you will be able to leave quarantine.

Proof of vaccination, recovery or negative test
Ireland is now a part of the EU Digital COVID Certificate for travel originating within the EU/EEA. The Digital COVID Certificate will make it easier to travel to and from these countries and will be accepted as proof of vaccination, recovery or negative test.

Arriving from Northern Ireland
Travellers whose journey originated in Northern Ireland and have not been overseas in the past 14-days are not obliged to complete a Passenger Locator Form or provide proof of vaccination, recovery or test results upon arrival into Ireland.

However travellers who have been overseas in the past 14 days are subject to the requirements based on their travel history, and according to their health status.

Arrivals to Ireland who are subject to home quarantine:

A 14-day quarantine period must be undertaken at the address specified on the electronic Passenger Locator Form

Passengers who arrive via Northern Ireland and have been overseas in the past 14-days must also observe the home quarantine regime where applicable.

- you may only leave your place of residence during the quarantine period to take a COVID-19 test, or for unavoidable reasons of an emergency nature to protect a person's health or welfare, or to leave the State
- for arrivals who are required to complete home quarantine you can end your period of quarantine if you receive written or SMS confirmation of a 'not detected' RT-PCR test result taken no less than 5 days after arrival
- you must retain the written or SMS confirmation of your test result for at least 14 days
- if you do not fulfil the legal requirement for mandatory quarantine you are committing an offence

Exemptions
Full or partial exemptions for passengers from home quarantine (where applicable)

There are some limited exemptions from the requirement to complete home quarantine (where applicable):

- a person arriving in the State in the course of their duty and who hold a valid Annex 3 certificate (ensuring the availability of goods and essential services)
- drivers of a heavy goods vehicle arriving in the State in the course of their duty

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- airline pilots, aircrew, maritime master or maritime crew and who arrive in the State in the course of performing their duties

- a person travelling to the State pursuant to an arrest warrant, extradition proceedings or other mandatory legal obligation

- a member of An Garda Síochána or Defence Forces travelling to the State in course of their duty

- a person travelling to the State for unavoidable, imperative and time-sensitive medical reasons and these reasons are certified by a registered medical practitioner or person with equivalent qualifications outside the State

- a person having been outside of the State to provide services to or perform the functions of an office holder (under any enactment or the Constitution) or a member of either house of the Oireachtas or the European Parliament

- diplomats and certain other categories of persons entitled to privileges and immunities in the State

The following may temporarily leave their place of quarantine when necessary to perform their essential function – and only for as long as strictly required:

- a person required to carry out essential repair, maintenance, construction or safety assurance of critical transport infrastructure, critical utility infrastructure, manufacturing services, information services, or communication services

- a member of staff of an international organisation, or person invited, carrying out functions required for the proper functioning of such organisations and which cannot be carried out remotely

- a passenger who is participating in a sporting event and has been provided with written certification by Sport Ireland

- journalists, carrying out their professional functions

Passengers who do not need to provide evidence of a pre-departure RT-PCR test (where applicable)

- passengers with a valid EU Digital COVID Certificate based on a vaccination or recovery certificate (or accepted alternative documents) who are travelling from the EU

- people who are travelling in the course of their duties and are an international transport worker in possession of an annex 3 certificate, the driver of a heavy goods vehicle or are aviation crew or maritime crew

- patients travelling to Ireland for urgent medical reasons, and that reason is certified by registered * children aged 11 and under

- passengers whose journey originated in Northern Ireland and have not been overseas in the 14-day prior to arrival

- a member of the Gardaí or Defence Forces personnel travelling to the State in the course of performing his or her duties

- a person who travels to the State pursuant to an arrest warrant, extradition proceedings or other mandatory legal obligation

- travel to perform the function of or provide services to an office holder or elected representative, where such travel to Ireland is required to continue providing such services or performing such functions

- if a citizen has a genuine humanitarian emergency requiring urgent travel, and might not be able to obtain the result of a pre-departure RT-PCR test in time, they should contact the nearest embassy or consulate immediately for advice and consular assistance before commencing their journey

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Shannon, Cork and Dublin International Airport COVID-19 restrictions and rules

https://www.dublinairport.com/covid-19/COVID19-safety-measures

For Shannon and Cork Airport guidelines please click on links below:

https://www.shannonairport.ie/covid-19-update/

https://www.corkairport.com/news/detail/2020/06/15/COVID-19-Update

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Resilience and Recovery Plan details:

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Resilience-and-Recovery-2020-2021-Plan-for-Living-with-COVID-19.pdf

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Failte Ireland Operational Guidelines for all sectors

Indoor Hospitality

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidance-for-Indoor-Hospitality.pdf

Guides, Tour Managers, Hosts/esses

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-Opening-Tourist-Guides.pdf

Hotels and Guesthouses

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-opening-Hotels-and-Guesthouses.pdf

Transportation

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-opening-Tourism-Transport.pdf

Visitor Attractions

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-opening-Visitor-Attractions.pdf

Restaurants and Cafes

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-opening-Restaurants-and-Cafes.pdf

Activity Providers

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-opening-Activity-Providers.pdf

Pubs

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-opening-Pubs.pdf

Business Conference and Event Venues

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-Opening-Business-Conference-and-Business-Event-Venues.pdf

Spas

https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Guidelines-for-Re-opening-Spas.pdf

For any further information please visit: https://covid19.failteireland.ie/