



Government of the Cook Islands

Te Kauono Tutara e te Mana Tiaki – Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Wednesday 12 August, 13:00

Cook Islands revise border settings to protect public health

In response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, as of 27 February 2020 the Cook Islands has established COVID-19 as a notifiable and dangerous condition under Schedule 2 of the Public Health Act (2004). Since February and as at 12 August 2020, the Cook Islands have no confirmed cases of COVID-19. The Cook Islands national approach to COVID-19 has therefore been one of preparedness, with key efforts centered on fortifying our borders (air and sea ports).

Yesterday New Zealand elevated its COVID-19 alert level in response to four new cases of COVID-19 emerging in South Auckland to Level 3 for the greater Auckland region, and Level 2 for the rest of New Zealand. While the re-emergence of COVID-19 in New Zealand is a disappointing set back, it has underscored and re-emphasised the necessity of rigorous and careful planning and strengthening of health, border and whole of society response capabilities.

Preventing COVID-19 from entering this country remains a priority for the Cook Islands Government and its Border Easement Taskforce (BET), and a reassessment of risk as relates our border measures will be undertaken daily going forward and as the situation evolves.

In response to the re-emergence of COVID-19 in New Zealand, and noting the source of the resurgence has not yet been ascertained at this time, the Cook Islands Cabinet at their meeting of 11 August approved the application of the Te Marae Ora Easing Border Restrictions Matrix which has the consequent effect of requiring a revision to the Cook Islands border settings and specifically entry requirements.

COVID-19 border settings revision for entry into the Cook Islands at Wednesday 12th August

As such, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration wish to advise that effective from 11.59pm Wednesday 12th August 2020 (CKT), the following people only are exempted for entry into the Cook Islands, provided they additionally meet the entry criteria specified below;

- i. Cook Islanders (as verified via Cook Islands Status stamp)*
- ii. Permanent Residents of the Cook Islands*
- iii. Cook Islands work permit holders*
- iv. Cook Islands resident permit holders*

Entry criteria

- Must have spent the last 14 days in New Zealand prior to entry into the Cook Islands
- Must have confirmation of medical clearance from Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health (TMO), verifying negative COVID-19 test result within 72 hours prior to travel

There will be no exemptions to the announced travel restrictions except for essential medical personnel travelling to the Cook Islands specifically to contribute to the COVID-19 response.

All travellers must comply with any New Zealand Government issued border requirements and approvals for exit from New Zealand, which may include exit screening and pre-departure health risk declaration

While not a requirement for entry, travellers should be aware of an additional mandatory requirement on arrival in to the Cook Islands, to undergo Supervised Quarantine and Medical Clearance for 14 days from arrival and a COVID-19 testing regime in their homes, as managed by TMO.

For further clarification and guidance on securing medical clearance from TMO, and the Supervised Quarantine and Medical Clearance on arrival into Rarotonga, travellers are encouraged to consult the Cook Islands COVID-19 information portal in the first instance at www.covid-19.gov.ck and to contact TMO directly at the following;

- Email: tmo.exemptions@cookislands.gov.ck
- Phone: +682 29 110

For further clarification and/or guidance on immigration entry criteria for the Cook Islands, please contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration directly at the following;

- Email: chere.arthur@cookislands.gov.ck and immigration2@cookislands.gov.ck
- Phone: +682 29 347

Further details can be garnered from the COVID-19 Update of 11 March as provided by the Border Easement Taskforce Chair, Deputy Prime Minister Mark Brown and Secretary of Health Dr Josephine Herman at <https://www.facebook.com/pmoffice.gov.ck/videos/785118698898889/>

Queries regarding this release can be directed to MFAI Director of International Affairs Karopaerangi Ngatoko at karopaerangi.ngatoko@cookislands.gov.ck, phone +682 29347.

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