

Policy Statement

This Policy reflects the Cook Islands' national response to COVID-19 and is a critical strategy to ensure the Cook Islands remains COVID-19 free.

This Policy clarifies the process for supervised quarantine and medical clearance (SQMC) in Auckland and Rarotonga, and outlines eligibility criteria for those requiring financial assistance from the Government of the Cook Islands. This will be limited to persons who normally reside in the Cook Islands and were stranded in New Zealand due to border restrictions issued by the Government of New Zealand on 14 March 2020 and Government of the Cook Islands on 24 March 2020, and had paid tickets for onward travel.

Cook Islanders and eligible persons intending to travel from Auckland to Rarotonga must undergo 14 days SQMC in Auckland followed immediately on arrival in Rarotonga by 14 days SQMC in Rarotonga. This includes being tested for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in order to receive medical clearance to travel and enter the Cook Islands.

All intending travellers must register with Te Marae Ora Cook Islands Ministry of Health (TMO) or the Cook Islands High Commission in New Zealand. TMO will arrange contact with the Auckland and Rarotonga Health Quarantine Managers.

The respective Health Quarantine Managers (HQM) in Auckland and Rarotonga will organise accommodation for those entering supervised quarantine. This includes meals and services for those travelling from Auckland to Rarotonga.

Prior to travel to Rarotonga, all persons must be tested for COVID-19 and only those with negative results will receive medical clearance to travel to Rarotonga.

Persons with existing chronic medical conditions will require medical assessment by a health provider to determine the level of health care required in the Cook Islands.

Travel to the designated Auckland accommodation facility as well as onwards travel to Auckland International Airport will be organised by the Auckland HQM.

Aircraft hand and check-in luggage restrictions will apply for all travellers. No food, plants or over-sized items are permitted.

On arrival at Rarotonga International Airport, TMO will organise travel to the designated accommodation facility where 14 days SQMC will take place. The Rarotonga HQM will organise meals and services. Families who wish to bring food and/or clothes for their relatives who are in supervised quarantine must leave these at the facility reception area.

Scope

This policy applies to all persons intending to travel to the Cook Islands.

Exclusions:

- Any person who does not abide by this policy will be refused entry in the Cook Islands
- Any person with a chronic medical condition **MUST NOT TRAVEL** as health services in the Cook Islands cannot be guaranteed.

Legislation and Regulations

Ministry of Health Act 2013, COVID19 Act 2020, Public Health Act 2004, Supervised Quarantine on Arrival in Rarotonga Regulations 2020.

Definitions

- **Cook Islander** means a person belonging to the part of the Polynesian race indigenous to the Cook Islands; and includes any person descended from a Cook Islander or person with Cook Islands permanent residence status, or their immediate family. Immediate family includes a spouse, parent, child, grandchild, niece, nephew, dependent parents of a spouse, as recognised under customary law
- **Child** means a person aged under 18 years
- **COVID-19** means Coronavirus Disease 2019
- **Health provider** is a New Zealand registered health care provider approved by TMO
- **Health Quarantine Manager** is a contractor engaged by TMO to manage the supervised quarantine and medical clearance process in Auckland and Rarotonga
- **Physical distancing** maintaining physical distance (minimum two metres) between oneself and others to avoid the spread of infection, while being pragmatic
- **Permit holders** includes persons with a valid resident permit to reside in the Cook Islands or a work permit to work and reside in the Cook Islands, along with their immediate family or dependents
- **Supervised quarantine** means the quarantine of persons or classes of persons in respect of COVID-19 according to the rules or directions made by Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health

Supervised quarantine rules

General protocols

- The place of supervised quarantine will be determined by TMO
- The duration of supervised quarantine will be 14 days in Auckland followed consecutively by 14 days in Rarotonga (this may be extended by TMO)
- All persons must adhere to specific requirements during the supervised quarantine period

Registration

All intending travellers must register with TMO. Registration information required:

- Full passport name
- Passport details (with any applicable permit details)
- Address and contact details (including phone, email)
- Cook Islands residency status
- Health status (including existing chronic medical conditions)
- Date of arrival in New Zealand
- Purpose of travel to the Cook Islands

All persons are responsible for purchasing their airline tickets.

All persons must be in a position to travel with minimal assistance.

Accommodation, meals and airport transfers

All eligible persons must enter 14 days supervised quarantine at an assigned facility approved by TMO. Persons in supervised quarantine must comply with strict quarantine rules.

All meals and land transportation from the SQMC facility to Auckland International Airport prior to departure to Rarotonga, will be organised by the Auckland HQM.

Specific protocols

Room assignments

- Single persons will be assigned a single room
- Couples will be assigned a double-room
- Families will be assigned appropriate rooms to ensure pragmatic physical distancing

All persons in supervised quarantine must

- Stay in their assigned room and keep the door closed
- Eat meals by themselves in their assigned room. Meals will be delivered to the room.
- Use the bathroom and toilet facilities assigned to their room and keep these clean
- Air or ventilate the room regularly by opening windows
- Not share clothes, towels or bed linen with others
- Not make physical contact with any other guests at the assigned premises
- Stay well and adhere to medical advice provided to maintain health and wellbeing
- Consent to COVID-19 test and the process for SQMC in Auckland and Rarotonga

All persons must practise personal hygiene

- Wash their hands regularly, for at least 20 seconds with soap and water rubbing the liquid thoroughly into hands until they are dry
- Always wash their hands before and after eating, and after using to the toilet/bathroom
- Cover their mouth and nose with a paper tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Throw used paper tissues into a separate bin in their assigned room
- Ensure any waste soiled with bodily fluids (faeces, blood, discharge) be disposed of in a separate bin in their room before being disposed of with other waste
- Clean and disinfect (using disinfectants supplied) any surfaces touched such as bedside tables, bedframes and other bedroom furniture, including the bath, basin and toilet regularly

Children

- If a child is in supervised quarantine, a person must be appointed to look after the child.

Financial assistance

Cook Islands Government financial assistance is available to persons who normally reside in the Cook Islands and meet specific criteria, but remains subject to approval from TMO:

- Cook Islanders who normally reside in the Cook Islands
- Cook Islands approved Resident and Work Permit holders
- TMO patient referrals to New Zealand who have received a medical clearance

Other provisions

All records relating to the administration of this Policy must be kept for at least seven years and are only accessible by the authorised staff. After the required seven year period, the Ministry will destroy the documentation in adherence with government official information management policies.

Associated Documents

Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health Patient Referral Policy