

Travellers urged to check Covid-19 health notices

Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, has advised South African citizens who are travelling to be aware of the health risks.



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"... When they travel they should check the travel and health notices for COVID-19 at their destinations," the Minister said in a statement on Tuesday.

On Sunday, President Cyril Ramaphosa declared the outbreak a national disaster and outlined a comprehensive plan detailing how the country will respond in the short to medium term.

The State of National Disaster entails that restrictions on entry, movement and exit will be prescribed in regulations to be issued by the responsible Ministers.

As high-and medium-risk countries are identified and the status of countries changes, travel alerts will be issued to communicate such changes and the measures applicable.

Government has identified high-risk countries, namely the Italian Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Korea, the Kingdom of Spain, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the French Republic, the Swiss Confederation and the People's Republic of China presently identified as well as the European Union.

South Africans planning to travel or transit to these countries should refrain from doing so.

"South African citizens are also to refrain from travelling on cruise ships due to the inherent risks involved in such travel as recent experiences have shown. This is effective immediately, until further notice. Non-essential travel to other countries should also be cancelled or postponed.

"South African citizens returning from high-risk countries will be subjected to testing and self-isolation or quarantine on return to South Africa," the Minister said.

Increased health screening measures at ports of entry for international destinations, which may include entry requirements, border closures, flight suspensions and quarantines, can be expected.

"South African citizens should contact the South African Mission/Consulate in the country of their destination to inform them of their presence in the country and provide them with information such as contact details and duration of stay," Pandor said.

Foreign travellers

No applications for visas by foreign travellers from high-risk countries will be approved.

Visas already issued are revoked with immediate effect for travellers that have not yet entered South Africa.

"All entry, regardless of compliance with visa requirements, of foreign travellers with ordinary passports, travelling from or transiting through high-risk countries presently identified as the Italian Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Korea, the Kingdom of Spain, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the French Republic, the Swiss Confederation and the People's Republic of China is prohibited until further notice," she said.

Visa waiver agreements with countries identified by the Department of Health as high-and medium-risk will be suspended from dates that will be advised through Travel Alerts.

"Any foreign national who has visited high-risk countries in the past 20 days will be denied a visa.

"Any foreign national affected by these travel restrictions who needs to travel to South Africa for emergency or compelling reasons may contact the nearest South African mission or consulate to apply for a visa. Such visa applications will be considered on merit and on a case-by-case basis," the Minister said.

The above restrictions exclude holders of diplomatic passports and travel documents issued by international organisations as well as their family members accredited to South Africa, and holders of official/service passports.

"The travel restrictions will also not apply to the crew members of aircraft and cargo ships, as well as cross-border rail and road transportation workers. However, such travellers will be subjected to medical screening and if required, can be isolated or quarantined for a minimum period of 14 days," the Minister said.

All international travellers

All international travellers, including South African citizens, entering South Africa will be required to complete and submit the prescribed Health Form and hand it to Health officials and Immigration officers upon arrival.

All travellers will be subjected to medical screening for Covid-19 upon entering South Africa and if required, can be isolated or quarantined for a minimum period of 14 days.

"Over and above the normal immigration requirements, entry into South Africa is subject to a passenger's cooperation with officials conducting tests. Travellers from medium-risk countries as identified by the South African Department of Health will be required to undergo high-intensity screening," the Minister said.

All travellers who have entered South Africa from high-risk countries since 15 February 2020 will be required

to present themselves for testing.

"South Africa has placed restrictions on attendance of international meetings. All organisers or attendees of international meetings are strongly advised to confirm whether attendance will be permitted before travelling to South Africa," the Minister said.

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