



OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER
PNG COVID-19 National Pandemic Response
Joint Agency Task Force
Media Statement – Tuesday 14th September 2021

Controller issues new measures as COVID-19 remains a threat

Police Commissioner and Controller of the PNG National Pandemic Response David Manning today authorised the release of new measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

The key changes are to international and domestic travel as well as social and business.

For international travel, the new measure are as follows:

1. New Quarantine periods - seven days quarantine for incoming persons who are fully vaccinated and 14 days quarantine for partially vaccinated persons. PNG citizens and permanent residents who are unvaccinated are to be quarantined for 21 days. Any foreign national who is unvaccinated will not be allowed entry into PNG. Children under the age of 18 years who travel with a parent or guardian will be quarantined for the same period as their parent or guardian. Children under the age of 18 who are unaccompanied will be assessed and quarantined on a case-by-case basis. Children under five years are exempted;
2. These new quarantine periods do not apply to all persons currently in quarantine - unless provided an exception which will continue to apply;
3. Approvals to arrive in PNG are valid for 60 days rather than the previous 90 days;
4. Approvals to enter PNG shall not be provided to persons travelling to PNG for the principal purpose of holidaying, vacationing or similar activity;
5. All persons travelling to PNG must have a valid COVID-19 test 72 hours prior to their original port of departure, rather than 7-days prior to departing for Port Moresby. For clarity and as an example, if a person initiated their travel in the United States of America and their flight transited through Singapore to Port Moresby, they would need to be tested 72 hours prior to their flight departing the United States of America, not the flight departing from Singapore. Children aged five years and under are exempted from being tested;
6. All people arriving into PNG must be tested upon arrival and whilst in quarantine. This is the responsibility of the facility hosting quarantined persons. The cost may be passed onto the individual by the facility, but it is the responsibility of the quarantine facility to organise the tests and pass the test results onto the NCC;
7. If an individual refuses to be tested, they will be quarantined for an additional 14 days;
8. There is no restriction on which medical providers may conduct these tests, except that the medical providers and their staff must be properly licensed. The NCC will accept results from all such medical testing providers;
9. Tracking of individuals for the purposes of quarantine is now only for home quarantine. Persons quarantining in scheduled quarantine facilities are not required to be tracked; and
10. All Charter Flights must - in addition to the normal approvals - have the Controller's written approval. This power has not been delegated.

Domestic travel and social measures have been merged into Measure No. 3 “Domestic Measures”.

Mr Manning said due to the increased threat of the COVID-19 Delta variant all provinces are now classified as a medium risk. He said it is the responsibility of Provincial Health Authorities to advise Provincial Administrators as to what their risk of COVID-19 is on a weekly basis. The Provincial Administrator is then required to communicate this to the Controller.

The Controller will make the final decision to classify a province from a medium risk to a high risk. Failure to report and to test by any province will be taken into account by the Controller when making this determination, as will a number of other factors.

The Controller has classified Western Province and Sandaun (West Sepik) as High-Risk Provinces.

Restrictions will be based on whether a province is High or Medium Risk.

For high-risk provinces the following will apply:

- Gatherings of only 20 people allowed;
- All persons leaving a high-risk province must undertake a rapid antigen test prior to departure;
- Night clubs, pubs and similar venues must be closed; and
- No sporting activities over 4 persons are allowed.

For medium risk provinces, gatherings of only 100 people are allowed.

Other domestic restrictions continue to apply, including;

(a) No person may fly if they are symptomatic for COVID-19, and

(b) All travellers must have their temperature checked by airline staff and no person may travel if their temperature registers at or over 37.5C (except for medivac and emergency flights).

The measure on no sale of alcohol on Friday, Saturday or Sunday nationwide still remains in force.

Mr Manning said these new measures which come into effect on September 15, 2021, have been made taking into consideration the continuous threat of COVID-19 whilst at the same time ensuring continuity and normalcy in all facets of life.s