

Group Travel during COVID-19 Pandemic

Recommendations Checklist

It is the onus of the individual to be aware and up to date on [public health guidance](#) while on campus or traveling as an individual or part of a group.

Group Travel is defined as a group of 5 or more individuals (of any combination of faculty, staff, students, or post-docs) following the same itinerary upon arrival at the destination.

Current Policy

- Groups may travel domestically or to countries rated [CDC Level 1 and Level 2](#) without a petition. Recommendations on the checklist below are strongly encouraged.
- Groups are required to submit a petition for travel to countries rated [CDC Level 3 and Level 4](#).
- All Penn-affiliated international travel must be registered in [MyTrips](#).
- Groups are expected to make themselves aware and abide by all state, local, tribal, and territorial government restrictions in the destination and upon return to Penn's campus, which may include quarantine and/or COVID-19 testing. Groups must also follow local directives regarding social distancing, face coverings, and other health and safety precautions.

A Note for Non-Vaccinated Individuals on Group Trips

- Non-vaccinated faculty, staff, and students should reach out to travelsafety@pobox.upenn.edu for additional guidance.

Recommendations for Penn Group Trips

The list below is exhaustive and should be treated as a guide for group trip administrators. We understand that your particular group itinerary may not allow for each measure to be implemented. Please feel free to contact travelsafety@pobox.upenn.edu if you have questions or need assistance with developing a contingency plan.

- Ask all group travelers to complete [PennOpen Pass](#) daily starting 14 days in advance of departure and for the duration of the group trip. Check to ensure that travelers have a Green Pass immediately prior to departure and/or upon arrival at destination. If a traveler feels unwell and PennOpen Pass does not trigger testing, students should call Student Health Service for a clinical consult; faculty/staff/post-docs can visit [Penn Medicine On Demand for clinical consult and support](#).
- Travel-related testing should only be advised based on CDC, Philadelphia Department of Public Health, or a country-specific requirement.
 - **IMPORTANT:** In most cases, the University cannot support providing official travel documentation. The COVID Results page is designed to have the information travelers need but may not be acceptable documentation required by airlines or country locations.
- Create an itinerary that is flexible and subject to change. Group trip administrators are responsible to design a contingency plan in the event of trip disruption. Below are some sample scenarios to think through:
 - Traveler(s) test positive prior to departure (cancelation and refund policy)
 - Traveler has symptoms of COVID during the trip and requires isolation, medical assistance, and testing.

- Traveler tests positive for COVID during the trip and is quarantined (potential group exposure).
- Trip leader tests positive for COVID during the trip and is quarantined (potential group exposure).
- Traveler/trip leader tests positive and is quarantined beyond the group's departure date (potential group exposure). Staff member is needed to stay in location with quarantined traveler longer than expected.
- Traveler/trip leader tests positive for COVID within 10 days of returning home (potential group exposure). If the traveler was tested outside of the Penn system, the positive test result should be reported through PennOpen Pass. This will trigger clinical care, public health guidance, and contact tracing.
- Arrange for additional trip leaders to assist with COVID protocols, testing, travel logistics and travelers that may require medical assistance or isolation.
- Arrange for single occupancy accommodations when/if possible.
- Consider separating large groups into smaller cohorts for the entirety of the trip to minimize and control potential COVID exposure.
- Prioritize outdoor activities, meetings, and dining arrangements.
- Consider hiring additional buses/vans to allow for social distancing during road travel.
- Consider bringing a thermal scan thermometer in the event a traveler is symptomatic.
- Adhere to airline and local guidance related to masks, social distancing, and vaccination requirements.
- Ensure all travelers have proper documentation needed to board flight(s) and enter destination country. This may include proof of vaccination (hard copy) and a negative COVID test as specified by the airline or country.
- Review destination and U.S. entry/reentry requirements related to U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and non-U.S individuals traveling on a non-U.S. passport.
- Plan on where and when travelers will get the required COVID test to re-enter the U.S. This must be done within 3 days of flying back to the U.S. The CDC maintains [more information on this requirement](#). Penn travelers and trip leaders can contact ISOS at phlopsmed@internationalsos.com or 215-942-8478 to find a COVID testing center abroad. Please note that the travel screening test is not covered by Penn's travel insurance.
- Ensure all travelers are registered in [MyTrips](#) which provides access to 24/7 travel assistance and insurance through [International SOS](#). Group registration feature available.
- Consider asking all travelers to review and sign the Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability, which, includes an attestation regarding travel during a pandemic.

FAQ

Do I have to be vaccinated to participate in a Penn-affiliated group trip?

Penn requires that all faculty, staff and students are fully vaccinated prior to travel unless they have a medical or religious exemption. According to the CDC, you should NOT travel internationally until you are fully vaccinated. If you are not fully vaccinated, have an exemption and must travel, follow the CDC's international travel [recommendations for unvaccinated people](#). The vaccination requirement should be made clear to travelers during trip planning and left to the traveler to manage. Keep in mind

there may be further restrictions, outside of Penn's control, that limit the travel experience for an unvaccinated individual. Any question related to unvaccinated travelers can be referred to Penn Wellness or travelsafety@pobox.upenn.edu.

Travelers that have an exemption from Penn's vaccination requirement must continue with the twice-weekly screening testing for the duration of the trip.

Should we consider purchasing trip cancellation and trip interruption insurance for our group? How much does it cost?

This is an individual decision based on who is paying for the trip, the risk of cancellation and the amount of **non-refundable** travel costs. If you are concerned about cancellation due to a COVID threat/surge/exposure, you would need to purchase "cancellation for any reason" (CFAR) insurance which will reimburse 75% of the declared (non-refundable) travel expenses. Penn offers CFAR insurance at a reduced rate for Penn-affiliated group trips. Contact travelsafety@pobox.upenn.edu for more information.

I am traveling to a location that requires a negative PCR or antigen test within 48 hours prior to departure. Where can I get this test?

Some countries require proof of a negative COVID test of all incoming travelers regardless of vaccination status. The types of COVID tests approved vary by destination. Requirements may ALSO vary within a country (e.g. testing requirement in Hawaii differs from rest of US). Timing of a COVID test will also vary by destination. Free COVID testing is provided readily, often with same day appointments, around the country:

- [CVS Minute Clinic](#)
- [RiteAid COVID Testing](#)
- City of Philadelphia runs [Mobile Testing Pop-up Events](#) & provides [Map of Permanent Testing Sites](#)

Do travelers need to get a COVID test before returning to the U.S.?

Yes, the [CDC](#) requires that all travelers get tested no more than 3 days before traveling by air into the United States and show of negative result to the airline before boarding the flight, or be prepared to show documentation of recovery (proof of a recent positive viral test and a letter from your healthcare provider or a public health official stating that you were cleared to travel). To save time, consider contacting [International SOS](#) now to find out where the COVID tests can be done and arrange appointments for your group in advance when possible.

Are COVID tests covered by Penn's travel insurance program?

COVID testing abroad is covered by Penn's international travel insurance when it is ordered by a physician for a person that has symptoms or recent exposure. If a traveler has symptoms of COVID or recent exposure, please contact International SOS (+1 215-942-8478) for advice and referral. COVID testing/screening for an asymptomatic person (e.g. pre-travel testing) is not covered.

What do I do if a traveler has symptoms of COVID and/or tests positive for COVID during the trip?

We encourage the program administrators and trip leaders to design a contingency plan in the event someone becomes ill and/or tests positive for COVID during the trip. International SOS can be contacted for advice and referrals to a local medical provider and/or COVID testing facility. In the meantime, have

a plan of where the traveler can be comfortably isolated. Consider designating which trip leader will assist the traveler with basic needs during isolation and provide added emotional and wellness support through check-ins and collaboration with Penn/ISOS resources.

How do we handle a traveler that may be quarantined beyond the end date of the trip? Who will pay for the additional costs?

If a traveler is required to quarantine by local officials during the trip, it is essential that the traveler feel supported. Please establish a way to communicate with the traveler and, if possible, a method to continue the traveler's virtual participation in the group trip. If the quarantine goes beyond the end date of the trip, it may be recommended that a trip leader remain in country, especially with an undergraduate student. Contact travelsafety@pobox.upenn.edu for guidance and additional resources to assist the traveler.

Travelers that are required to quarantine by local officials in a foreign country, may be entitled to reimbursement of expenses through Penn's travel insurance program. Please collect all receipts and contact travelsafety@pobox.upenn.edu for more information.

Do students, faculty or staff need to quarantine before returning to campus after a trip?

Penn requires that all students, faculty, and staff are fully vaccinated prior to travel unless they have a medical or religious exemption. According to the CDC, vaccinated travelers do NOT need to self-isolate upon returning to the U.S. after an international trip.

Anyone coming from outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should be mindful of guidance from the [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#) and the [City of Philadelphia](#).

If a student has an exemption from vaccination, can they travel on a Penn trip? (group trip or individual travel)

Student vaccination exemptions are rare. If a non-vaccinated traveler requests information related to their participation on a Penn-Affiliated international trip, please refer them to Penn Wellness or travelsafety@pobox.upenn.edu. If the itinerary is such that a vaccine is required by the destination location, travel agency, or other 3rd party, the traveler must adhere to the requirement. Traveler questions regarding the requirement should be handled between the traveler and the 3rd party.

Should a non-U.S. citizen/permanent resident participate in a group trip outside the U.S.?

Travelers are encouraged to consider all risk factors when making decisions regarding travel outside the United States. Additional considerations for non-US travelers include U.S. re-entry requirements, visa status and availability of U.S. consulate services, and travel restrictions that may differ based on the traveler's nationality. Non-U.S. travelers should visit the ISSS website for more information <https://global.upenn/iss/travel> or reach out to an ISSS advisor to discuss their circumstances.

Can trip leader collect pre-departure COVID tests results (to ensure all travelers have negative result required to board plane)?

The onus should be on the traveler to manage the requirements for travel. We encourage individual and group travelers to use PennOpen Pass daily starting 14 days prior to trip departure and for the duration of the trip. Travelers that use the Penn Cares Screening Program prior to travel will have a green pass if their COVID test is negative. Travelers that test off campus will self-report their test result within the PennOpen Pass system.

If one traveler tests positive during the trip, do other exposed travelers need to test or quarantine?

The most up to date public health guidance, including isolation and quarantine information, can be found here: <https://coronavirus.upenn.edu/content/public-health-guidance> However, travelers and trip leaders should be aware of any differences in guidance at the destination location and abide by all local directives.

What if the COVID risk outlook of the destination country gets worse prior to the departure date? Do we need to cancel the group trip?

We expect that group trip administrators will monitor the COVID outlook of their destination. If the COVID trend is worsening or travel restrictions are being imposed, please contact travelsafety@pobox.upenn.edu for further guidance. A decision to cancel is based on the need for travel, ability to alter itinerary to further mitigate risks and the comfort level of the travelers involved.

I'm still unsure if we should continue with this group trip?

Traveling during the pandemic remains a risky activity, for health reasons but also for logistical and financial reasons. Trip leaders should feel strongly that the academic or business value of your trip outweighs the risk involved. The itinerary should be flexible and easily altered if the pandemic situation deteriorates, or travel restrictions make the trip more difficult or impossible.

All travelers, even those who are fully vaccinated, should continue to wear a mask while traveling, distance when possible, and practice good hand hygiene. Travel guidance and entry restrictions are fluid and change frequently.