



*Republic of Palau*

## **Ministry of Health and Human Services**

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### **MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

#### **DIRECTIVE NO. 32-21**

#### **AUTHORIZING ISOLATION, QUARANTINE, AND RESTRICTED ENTRY MEASURES TO PREVENT AND MITIGATE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)**

**WHEREAS**, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a severe acute respiratory illness that was first identified in December 2019, and that occurs through human-to-human respiratory transmission; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 presents a major threat to public health in the Republic, and is particularly dangerous to the elderly or those with respiratory or other underlying medical conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on February 11, 2020, and further characterized it as a Pandemic on March 12, 2020. The WHO and CDC recommend that all countries and territories implement aggressive measures to prevent and control the transmission of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, as of October 7, 2021, over 90% of Palau's population has been vaccinated against COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the Minister of Health and Human Services has established COVID-19 protocols for case prevention, identification, and management, and more than 140 businesses are now certified through the Pandemic Safety Certification Program for establishing COVID-safe practices such as mask wearing, social distancing, regular disinfecting, and hand hygiene; and

**WHEREAS**, the Republic coordinates closely with the WHO, Pacific Islands Health Officers Organization (PIHOA), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on public health guidance, best practices and suggested guidelines for mitigation of COVID-19;

**NOW THEREFORE**, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the Director of Public Health of the Ministry of Health and Human Services, I hereby authorize revised requirements for Entry and as required for Isolation and Quarantine pursuant to 34 PNC § 102(m) and 34 PNC § 701 and the Ministry of Health Rules & Regulations for Isolation and Quarantine of Contagious Diseases mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the Republic of Palau, as follows:

#### **Section 1. Vaccine and Testing Requirements Applicable to International Travel into the Republic:**

- **COVID Safe Practices.** All Travelers are advised to practice social distancing, wear a mask over the nose and mouth when within six feet of others, and avoid large indoor gatherings for fourteen (14) days prior to their travel to the Republic.

- Unvaccinated Individuals Under 12 years of age. Unvaccinated individuals under 12 years of age are permitted to travel to the Republic and must adhere to all other requirements of this section.
- Children Under 3 years of age. Children Under 3 years of age are exempt from the requirement to be COVID-19 tested prior to travel into the Republic.

**A. Transit and Entry Protocols:**

- Steps for Entry:

1. Vaccination. Travellers must submit proof of complete COVID-19 vaccination with final dose administered at least fourteen (14) days prior to departure to the Republic. Vaccine received must be approved or authorized for emergency use by either the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the World Health Organization. Palau also accepts the Medigen vaccine authorized by the Republic of China – Taiwan’s health authorities.

\*For commercial air travel, travellers must submit proof to the airline.

2. Negative COVID-19 PCR Test or Documentation of Recovery. All Travelers must also provide proof of either:

- a. A negative result of a COVID-19 PCR test (any type of PCR test, including NAAT, RT-PCR, qPCR, RT-LAMP, TMA, molecular test, isothermal amplification, ddPCR, or CRISPR), and such test must be taken within three (3) days prior to departure from the point of origin to the Republic; or
- b. Documentation of recovery from COVID-19 which includes proof of a recent positive viral test and a letter from a healthcare provider or a public health official stating that you have recovered and are cleared to travel.

\*For commercial air travel, travellers must submit proof to the airline.

3. Testing and Mitigation Orders After Arrival. All Travelers shall be COVID tested on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) and fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) days following their arrival to the Republic and are required to follow the Mitigation Orders issued upon arrival.

**B. Transit for Unvaccinated Individuals:**

- Vessels carrying Unvaccinated Individuals may be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis and upon the specific orders and written authorization of the Director of Public Health.

**C. Travel Entry for Residents from Authorized Jurisdictions Under Special Conditions:**

- Authorized Jurisdictions are those that have been approved by the President of the Republic to establish travel to the Republic of Palau under special conditions. Residents of Authorized Jurisdictions may be exempted from Section (1)(A) above and travel to Palau upon the following conditions:

1. Submit a negative result of a COVID-19 PCR test (any type of PCR test, including NAAT, RT-PCR, qPCR, RT-LAMP, TMA, molecular test, isothermal amplification, ddPCR, or CRISPR), and such test must be taken at the airport up to five (5) hours before departure the Authorized Jurisdiction; and

2. No travel history to destinations outside of the Authorized Jurisdiction within the last 14 days prior to departure from the Authorized Jurisdiction; and

3. No prior history of COVID-19 infection, no close contact with any person who is under investigation for COVID-19, no close contact with laboratory-confirmed COVID-

19 case, and no person under a self-isolation, home quarantine, or self-monitoring order for the last two months; and

4. Testing After Arrival. All Travelers shall be COVID tested on the day of departure or on the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) day following their arrival to the Republic, whichever is earlier.

**D. Guidelines for Vessel Crew:**

- The crew of any aircraft or vessel entering the Republic must provide negative COVID-19 PCR test results test (any type of PCR test, including NAAT, RT-PCR, qPCR, RT-LAMP, TMA, molecular test, isothermal amplification, ddPCR, or CRISPR) and/or provide official documentation on infection control measures implemented for aircraft or vessel operations and health management protocols for personnel;
- Any crew member of any air or water vessel that disembarks into the Republic of Palau shall be subject to these regulations, except in cases wherein an air or water vessel breaks down unexpectedly within the territory of the Republic. In such cases, any crew member disembarking such vessel does not fulfill specified entry requirements, they shall then undergo other mitigation measures as deemed necessary by MHHS.

**Section 2. Isolation.** The isolation of persons infected by COVID-19 is hereby authorized as follows:

- Any person proven or strongly suspected to be infected with COVID-19 shall be isolated for a period up to fourteen (14) days either at an isolation facility or at home at the discretion of the Director of Public Health; and
- Infection may be proven or strongly suspected based on a presumptive test result, and/or a confirmatory test result by means of authorized assays for viral testing include those that detect SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid or antigen.
- Isolation Facilities: The Alternate Care Site (ACS) at Kalau Gym in Meyuns, Koror shall be the primary Isolation and care Facility for non-critical infected persons. The isolation rooms of Belau National Hospital shall be reserved for infected persons in need of critical care. The Ministry of Health (MOH) shall identify other appropriate and adequate facilities, either public or private property to be designated as Isolation Facilities for COVID-19 infected persons as necessary.

**Section 3. Quarantine.** The quarantine of persons exposed to COVID-19 is hereby authorized as follows:

- Any person determined to have been exposed to COVID-19 shall undergo mandatory quarantine for a period up to fourteen (14) days, unless otherwise specified below; and
- Any person who has had direct contact with a person infected by COVID-19 shall be considered to have been exposed to COVID-19 and quarantined for a period up to fourteen (14) days; and
- Any person who has had indirect contact with COVID-19, such as contact with potentially contaminated surfaces, may be considered to have been exposed to COVID-19 and quarantined for an appropriate period; and
- Any person who has had indirect contact with a person who has been exposed to COVID-19 may be considered to have been exposed to COVID-19 and quarantined for an appropriate period.
- MOH shall identify appropriate and adequate facilities, either public or private property, to be designated as Quarantine Facilities for exposed and potentially exposed persons.
- If any quarantined person is found to be infected, that person shall be promptly relocated to an appropriate isolation facility, which may include the individual's home if determined appropriate by the Director of Public Health.

**Section 4.** Applicability to all Travel into the Republic.

- This Directive is intended for all travelers into the Republic, including those entering the Republic via commercial or private vessel. Private and charter vessel travelers must submit proof of vaccination at least 72 hours before departure and test results within 72 hours of departure to MHHS for verification.

**Section 5.** Delegation of Authority.

- Pursuant to 34 PNC § 101 and Section 4.10 of the MHHS Rules & Regulations for Isolation and Quarantine of Contagious Diseases, Authority to order the isolation or quarantine of persons found to be infected or exposed within the Republic of Palau or upon arrival into the Republic either by sea or at the Palau International Airport, is hereby delegated to the Director of the Bureau of Public Health.

**Section 6.** Exemptions.

- No exemptions to the isolation or quarantine requirements of this directive may be made, except by the Director of Public Health and in writing. The Director may issue exemptions on an individual, case-by-case basis, only based on an articulable medical justification. The Director may also authorize transit for individuals that have received an unauthorized vaccine.

**Section 7.** Term.

- This directive supersedes and replaces MOH Directive No. 27-21, which took effect on August 12, 2021. This directive shall take effect on the date of issuance and unless cancelled, revoked or re-issued, shall remain in effect for 90 days from effective date.

Issued this 7th day of October, 2021 at the Ministry of Health and Human Services in Koror, Republic of Palau.



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Sherilynn Madraisau  
Director of Public Health  
Ministry of Health and Human Services