



Department
for Transport

From the Secretary of State
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Dear Colleagues,

Travel Corridors: Spain

I am writing to you regarding the decision to remove Spain from the list of countries and territories from which international arrivals are exempt from self-isolation requirements, and the reasoning behind this.

I know that requiring self-isolation by families, holiday-makers and business travellers arriving from Spain from today will come as unwelcome news to many of us. Many have had to delay their holidays and travel until now and we do not underestimate the impact this change will have. However, we have had to act at pace, working with the devolved administrations, to protect public health.

Why has the situation changed?

The Spanish Health Ministry published data on the afternoon of Friday 24 July, which was subsequently reported on by the European Centre for Disease Control. Over 2,000 new cases were reported, confirming a pattern seen on the previous day. These new cases reported across the Thursday and Friday were 75% higher than those reported on the previous two days.

This pace of increase, together with the high seven-day case rate for Spain and the picture of increasing cases across most regions, represented a significant change. Ministers therefore agreed that urgent action was needed to protect the health of the UK public.

The Government has been consistently clear since the commencement of its 'Travel Corridors' policy that it will act at pace if required to do so by the evidence.

For UK travellers in Spain now

We appreciate there will be many British nationals currently in Spain who may be concerned. We are advising these people that they may continue with their trip and should continue to adhere to social distancing and good hygiene, as they do in the UK.

They should follow any local rules and check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's travel advice pages on GOV.UK for further information. They will need to fill in the passenger locator form before arriving back in the UK and must then self-isolate for 14 days.

For UK travellers who are due to, or wish to, travel to Spain

We appreciate many more British nationals are planning to travel to Spain in the coming months during the summer season.

Currently, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is advising against all but essential travel to mainland Spain – this does not cover the Canary Islands or the Balearic Islands. Travel advice relates to the risk to a UK national visiting a foreign country and a range of factors from health care facilities to security to entry requirements are considered. The approach the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have taken is the same as they have in place for Portugal with respect to Madeira and the Azores.

We also working closely with airlines and airports to ensure they are communicating with affected passengers – those currently in Spain and those who plan to travel there in the immediate future.

Covid-19 has changed the nature of international travel. Travellers should carefully check the latest Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>) before making plans and commencing their journeys, and should purchase travel insurance.

I have provided additional questions and answers below, and further information can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>.

Yours sincerely,



**Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**

Annex A: Additional questions and answers

Does this mean I can cancel my holiday and get a full refund?

Rights will depend on individual airlines and travel operators and the circumstances of the flight or holiday being cancelled. You should contact your airline or travel operator to understand your terms and conditions of travel.

If your flight is cancelled, you will be entitled to a refund or rebooking. However, if the flight operates and you choose to cancel, your right to a refund will depend on the terms and conditions of your booking.

Will I get compensation from the Government?

Throughout this crisis we have been clear that we will act swiftly and decisively to protect public health. We will update travel advice when it is necessary. During this global pandemic it is more important than ever that people check travel advice regularly and have appropriate travel insurance.

The Government has announced that refund credit notes issued by ATOL protected travel operators will be backed by the Government were the company to become insolvent.

My employer has told me I need to come back to the office, but now I'm coming back from a country that requires me to self-isolate, what should I do?

The Government is encouraging employers to be understanding to UK nationals returning from Spain having to self-isolate.

What does this mean for my travel insurance? Will it cover me?

You should contact your travel insurance provider to understand your terms and conditions of travel.

If you were already in the country when the advice changed then your insurance is likely to continue to cover you until you return home. Travelling to countries against Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice is likely to invalidate your travel insurance and this would apply to those yet to travel to mainland Spain.

Customers looking to change or cancel their travel plans should speak with the airline provider, tour operator or travel agent in the first instance and check your policy wording as you may not be covered for travel disruption or cancellation if you booked or took out your travel insurance after the pandemic started. In either circumstance, we advise checking with your travel insurance provider.

What if I transit through Spain on my journey to the UK? Will I need to self-isolate?

England's approach requires all arrivals from outside the Common Travel Area to provide information on where they have come from, as well as, if necessary, where they will be self-isolating. This is enforced by the Border Force at the point of entry.

Passengers are required to disclose all countries they have been to in the past 14 days on the passenger locator form. If they have travelled through a non-exempt country in the 14 days before arriving in the UK, they will need to self-isolate until 14-days have elapsed, starting with the day after they left the non-exempt country.

Why has the Government decided to do this now?

Given the increase in cases over the course of week and the amount of travel between the UK and Spain, Public Health England (PHE) and the Joint Biosecurity Centre decided to undertake an urgent review. Drawing on data and intelligence from PHE, the Joint Biosecurity Centre updated Ministers and the Chief Medical Officer on Saturday 25 July on the evolving picture, which showed a significant change towards the end of the working week.

Why is the Travel Advice from the FCO different to the Border measures exemptions?

While the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have established systems for assessing Travel Advice on a regional basis, we currently only consider self-isolation requirements on a national basis. People will still need to self-isolate when returning from anywhere in Spain as well as the Canary and Balearic Islands because self-isolation arrangements are put in place on the basis of the health position in a country as a whole.

The purposes of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice and UK border health measures are distinct.

Travel advice relates to the risk to a UK national visiting a foreign country and a range of factors from health care facilities to security to entry requirements are considered.

Border measures exemptions are about managing the risk to UK public health. Exemptions to border health measures are based on assessments made by our Joint Biosecurity Centre incorporating data from PHE and other sources. PHE and the Joint Biosecurity Centre continue to review data for all countries on a weekly basis and we will be monitoring Spain data closely.

Our approach to border measures is under regular review based on the latest public health information. Our approach to sub-national regions and islands is part of this. Any decisions will be informed by the latest public health information available.