

# ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

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## What to know about Alaska's updated COVID-19 travel advisories

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*Sanitizer stations are available to air travelers walking through Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport on Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020. (Bill Roth / ADN)*

Fully vaccinated travelers to Alaska no longer need to worry about testing before or after they fly, or quarantining after they arrive in the state, health officials said this week.

On Monday, the state's health advisories for interstate and intrastate travel were updated to reflect the change for vaccinated travelers, which officials say are aligned with the latest guidance from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "as well as our own look at travel in and around the state of Alaska," state emergency manager Bryan Fisher said during a call with reporters Thursday.

The CDC said earlier this month that fully vaccinated people don't need to test or quarantine when they travel "as long as they continue to take COVID-19 precautions while traveling — wearing a mask, avoiding crowds, socially distancing, and washing hands frequently."

Most of Alaska's pandemic travel guidance for visitors has included suggestions — not requirements — since February, when the state's COVID-19 emergency expired. Previously, proof of a negative COVID-19 test or a two-week quarantine had been required for all travelers to the state.

A person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving the last recommended dose of vaccine.

Unvaccinated travelers are still encouraged to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken with 72 hours of departure to prevent coronavirus spread, according to the updated advisory. A second test is recommended, but also optional, five to 14 days after arrival.

“We want to make sure that everyone coming to the state — whether they are residents, workers, or tourists — understand that they are more than welcome to use our (online travel) portal to sign up and receive a test when they get here,” Fisher said.

*[TSA extends mask mandate for planes and public transportation until September]*

Optional COVID-19 testing at most of the state's airports will continue through the summer, and will be free for both residents and nonresidents — and even for travelers who are vaccinated but want to be extra cautious, Fisher said. The three COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the U.S. are highly, but not 100%, effective at preventing transmission or illness from the coronavirus.

“Just because we are not recommending that people who are fully vaccinated get tested, for those who want to be extra cautious, they are welcome to get tested at our airport as well — vaccinated or not,” Fisher said.

The state's travel guidance says that anyone “currently positive with COVID-19, cannot travel to Alaska” unless a provider or public health agency clears them for travel or releases them from isolation.

A plan to offer COVID-19 vaccines to tourists at four of Alaska's major airports beginning in June is also on track, health officials said this week.

A trial run of an airport vaccine clinic held at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport last week went well, said Heidi Hedberg, director of the Alaska Division of Public Health. She said at least 200 people attended the clinic.

Vaccinations for visitors will be offered at the Anchorage, Juneau, Ketchikan and Fairbanks airports beginning June 1.

Some local communities may still have their own travel restrictions in place, and travelers are still encouraged to check local mandates and ordinances when planning their trip.

For the latest on Alaska's travel recommendations, visit [covid19.alaska.gov/travelers](https://covid19.alaska.gov/travelers).

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### About this Author

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Annie Berman covers health care for the Anchorage Daily News. She's a fellow with Report for America, and is a graduate of the University of California Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. A veteran of AmeriCorps and Vista volunteer programs, she's covered breaking news, crime, culture and politics for Mission Local and KQED in the Bay Area.

