

FSM Information Services

Public Announcement

Why the FSM National Government Reinstated Travel Restrictions for Travelers Originating From COVID-19 Affected Countries

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On February 28th, 2020 His Excellency David W. Panuelo, at the advice of his Cabinet and the COVID-19 Task Force, chose to reinstate the 14-day waiting period for travelers originating from COVID-19 affected countries until March 13th, 2020, where it may be reinstated again pending review and advice from the COVID-19 Task Force et al. All travel to and from the People's Republic of China remains banned, regardless of any 14-day waiting period. This public service announcement seeks to address common questions citizens, residents, and travelers may have regarding the reinstatement of these travel restrictions. The decree signed February 28th, 2020 to reinstate the travel restrictions can be found

here: [https://gov.fm/files/Decree to Extend Travel Restrictions Feb 28 2020.pdf](https://gov.fm/files/Decree%20to%20Extend%20Travel%20Restrictions%20Feb%2028%202020.pdf)

1. Why have the travel restrictions been reinstated?

- a. The travel restrictions have been reinstated for several purposes, including:
 - i. The FSM States of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae—both at the leadership level and particularly at their State Departments of Health—have requested an extension of the travel restrictions so as to improve their capacity to prevent the virus from entering their islands, and to contain the virus when it reaches the FSM.
 - ii. The FSM COVID-19 Task Force consensus is that reinstating the travel restrictions is necessary for both the improvement of containment capacity and the development of a contingency plan for when COVID-19 arrives in the FSM.

2. I am a traveler originating from a COVID-19 free state or territory (e.g. Okinawa, Alaska, Tasmania) in a country that has one or more cases of COVID-19 (e.g. Japan, United States, Australia)—am I required to wait 14 days in a non-COVID 19 country, state, or territory before traveling into the FSM?

- a. Yes. For the purposes of the Public Health Emergency Declaration, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the U.S. State of Hawaii are considered separate from the rest of the United States; ALL other countries are considered whole, i.e. a COVID-19 case in the U.S. State of Washington means travelers from Alaska or New York must ALSO wait in Guam or Hawaii for 14-days.

3. What happens if Guam or Hawaii get a case of COVID-19?

- a. If Guam or Hawaii get a case of COVID-19, travelers still wishing to enter the FSM must find a separate country, state, or territory without COVID-19 and wait there for 14 days prior to arrival in the FSM.

4. How will cargo shipping be affected by the travel restrictions?

- a. The cargo shipping clarification remains in effect; cargo vessels must remain in COVID-19 free territory for 14 days prior to entering the FSM.
- b. Cargo shipping will not be halted, but the FSM National Government has implemented superior means of mitigating risk of COVID-19 exposure which will

continue both for the duration of the Public Health Emergency Declaration and afterwards as standard operating procedure.

5. What are some measures that I can take to prevent COVID-19 from affecting me and my family?

- a. Wash your hands.
 - i. Wash your hands before and after you eat.
 - ii. Wash your hands after using the toilet.
 - iii. Wash your hands after you sneeze. (And sneeze into a tissue or the sleeve of your shirt!)
 - iv. Wash your hands after meeting someone who is sick.
 - v. Wash your hands after working or playing outside.
 - vi. Wash your hands after contact with animals.
- b. Avoid spitting in public.
- c. Avoid close contact with others when you are experiencing cough and fever.
- d. Sneeze into a tissue or the sleeve of your shirt. (And wash your hands after you sneeze!)
- e. If you have symptoms such as fever, coughing, and/or difficulty breathing, seek medical attention as early as possible; be sure to share your travel history with your healthcare provider.

6. Does FSM have any cases of COVID-19?

- a. No. As of February 28th, 2020, the FSM does not have any cases of COVID-19.

7. Are any other Pacific Island countries treating COVID-19 in a similar manner to the FSM?

- a. Yes. The Republic of Nauru, the Republic of Vanuatu, American Samoa, the Independent State of Samoa, and the Republic of Kiribati have travel restrictions very similar to the FSM's.

8. Are employees of the National Government allowed to travel internationally?

- a. No. Although this is not part of the Public Health Emergency Declaration, the President implemented a memo for all National Government employees to cease travel abroad.