

STATES OF JERSEY



INCOMING PASSENGERS FROM GREEN CATEGORY JURISDICTIONS: REQUIREMENT TO SELF-ISOLATE (P.122/2020) – AMENDMENT

**Lodged au Greffe on 5th October 2020
by the Minister for Health and Social Services**

STATES GREFFE

INCOMING PASSENGERS FROM GREEN CATEGORY JURISDICTIONS:
REQUIREMENT TO SELF-ISOLATE (P.122/2020): AMENDMENT

After the word “introduce,” for the words “with immediate effect” substitute the words “effective from 23:59 on Monday 12th October 2020”.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Minister for Health and Social Services to take the necessary steps to introduce, **effective from 23:59 on Monday 12th October 2020**, a requirement for all incoming passengers from ‘Green’ jurisdictions or regions to self-isolate until receipt of a negative result from their first test for COVID-19.

REPORT

Introduction and context

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Jersey has adopted a clear and consistent “suppress, contain and shield” strategy. This remains our objective – to keep the virus at very low levels and to adopt proportionate approaches which cause the least overall harm to Islanders.

Our Safer Travel Policy has been in place since 3rd July and, to date, has led to the successful and safe resumption of commercial travel to, and from, Jersey. The Policy is designed to be flexible and adaptable, enabling Jersey to respond rapidly to both internal and external developments, in order to protect the health of Islanders and keep the community as open and operational as is safely possible. This has been clearly seen in practice through the operation of the red, amber and green country/regional classifications, where we haven’t hesitated to make the required changes in response to external COVID-19 developments. This has ensured that we can maintain Jersey’s good position, which Islanders have worked so hard to achieve together.

Our policy and strategy have seen us through the summer months without significant transmission within our community, and we are prepared for a COVID-19 winter. We have an excellent test, track and trace system in place to identify and isolate positive cases. Importantly, these systems are continuing to develop, including through the contact tracing app, which will be launching very shortly.

Indeed, the Chief Minister referred, in a statement on 28th August, to the need to act immediately on evidence of any cluster in the community should it arise and confirmed that the Government would take steps, including targeted restrictions if necessary, to stop any similar clusters from occurring, and this is something that we continue to monitor.

The preparations for a COVID-19 winter have also included consideration of how to further adapt the safer travel policy for the coming months. The Chief Minister and I made statements regarding this subject on 24th September. We confirmed that once our average turnaround times for arrival test results gets below 12 hours, we will require all arrivals from green regions to self-isolate until they receive a negative result. This will maintain and enhance our border protections.

The Chief Minister and I stated that a further announcement would be made to confirm when this requirement would commence. In a press conference on 29th September, the Deputy Medical Officer of Health indicated that the 12-hour average turnaround time for arrival test results was likely to be achievable from mid-October and possibly before. The Chief Minister also confirmed to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel on 1st October that we would reach this position in the next 2 weeks and by mid-October.

This is a policy which we have been seeking to implement without delay, and I am pleased to confirm, via this amendment, subject to Assembly approval, that the policy can become effective as soon as 23:59 on Monday 12th October 2020. This is fully consistent with all our previous statements to Members and the Public.

The proposition and amendment

I am encouraged that Deputy Inna Gardiner's proposition ([P.122/2020](#)) is consistent with this clearly stated Government policy and approach. Our position is fully aligned with the spirit and intention of Deputy Gardiner's proposition and, accordingly, I am pleased to support it, subject to this small but important clarifying amendment.

By setting a specific date for the prompt implementation of this policy, the amendment provides clarity and confidence for Islanders, their families and other travellers.

It ensures that a reasonable notice period is provided of this prompt and proportionate change, combined with confidence that our on-Island testing centre can consistently ensure that the average turnaround time for arrival test results is reduced to 12 hours or less. This improvement has been, and will continue to be, achieved through a phased series of professionally managed stepped increases in on-Island testing capacity.

This date will be announced through various public means, including this proposition, in order to ensure that Islanders, their families and others travelling to Jersey are given sufficient advance notice of the date from which anyone arriving from a green country, or region, will be required to self-isolate until they receive a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result.

Maintaining our good position

This development to our policy for arrivals from green countries and regions is a necessary, proportionate and an important part of our approach to protecting Islanders' health during the winter, ensuring we manage the balance of risks and seek to cause the least overall harm.

Deputy Gardiner raised some understandable concerns regarding the spread of the virus in her report, but as I have referenced above, Islanders can be re-assured by the robust infrastructure, processes and requirements we have in place. Indeed, the example highlighted by Deputy Gardiner provides evidence that our track and trace systems are working effectively.

Furthermore, and in accordance with [P.89/2020](#), Members will recall that Islanders are not permitted to visit any hospital, residential care home, nursing home, domiciliary care setting, the prison or any person at high risk of COVID-19 until they have completed any required period of isolation and/or received a negative PCR test.

In addition, we have been clear as to the wider guidance with those waiting to receive their test result, but who don't yet have to isolate, are required to meet. This was emphasised most recently on 2nd October and includes requirements to:

- Limit time away from the home or from their accommodation;
- Limit social contact with others;
- Adhere to one metre physical distancing;
- Avoid public transport, where possible;
- Avoid indoor gatherings, including bars and restaurants, where possible; and
- Follow good hand and respiratory hygiene and remain vigilant for any known symptoms.

These requirements will be highlighted and re-emphasised to all green arrivals over the coming days as part of the preparations for the introduction of self-isolation.

Members should also keep in mind that, alongside these new requirements for green arrivals, Ministers have set out plans for a number of further pre-emptive internal mitigation measures, and these will similarly be presented to the Assembly for consideration in the coming weeks.

Moving forward together

It is crucial that we continue to take the necessary steps to keep Islanders safe through the winter months. This will ensure we can protect our health and vulnerable Islanders whilst maintaining the freedoms we are able to safely enjoy.

Travel in and out of Jersey is not only for tourists, particularly as we move into the winter months – it is a key part of life for very many Islanders and central to their well-being. Keeping our Island as safely open and operational as possible, whilst protecting Islanders' health, is a key part of Jersey's public health approach to tackling this virus. Supporting this proposition, as amended, will allow us to provide the necessary clarity regarding the introduction of this measure and help maintain the key balance of protecting lives, livelihoods and our way of life during this pandemic. I very much hope it will meet with the approval of Members.

Financial and Manpower implications

There are no additional resource implications for the States arising as a consequence of adopting this amendment. It should be noted that there are financial and manpower implications arising from the implementation of the safer travel policy, and these vary over time.