

PUBLICATION

Travelers From China: COVID-19 Testing Requirement Returns and Consular Posts Close

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Travelers heading to the U.S. from China will need to comply with new COVID-19 testing requirements effective January 5, 2023, and will face significant delays in nonimmigrant and immigrant visa processing due to consular closures driven by impacts of COVID-19.

The Biden administration in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced on December 28, 2022, that it will implement a requirement for a negative COVID-19 test or documentation of recovery for air passengers boarding flights to the U.S. originating from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau.

The testing requirement goes into effect at 12:01 a.m. ET on January 5, 2023, and applies to all air passengers traveling from these areas who are ages two years and older regardless of nationality and vaccination status. Those traveling from the PRC via third-country transit and passengers connecting through the U.S. onward to other destination countries are subject to the requirement as well.

Any passengers flying to the U.S. from China on or after this date will need to obtain a COVID-19 test **no more than two days before flying** and present proof of the negative test to the airline before boarding. The tests can be either a PCR test or an antigen self-test administered through a telehealth service. Passengers who **test positive more than ten days before their flight** can provide documentation of recovery in lieu of the negative test result.

The announcement follows on the heels of the closures of consular posts throughout China due to the operational impacts caused by the surge of COVID-19 infections. Posts in Beijing and Shanghai are currently providing only limited passport and emergency citizen services, and posts in Wuhan, Shenyang, and Guangzhou are providing only emergency consular services until further notice.

For full details on consular closures, [click here](#).

If you would like to know more about these testing requirements, please contact **Melanie C. Walker** or a member of Baker Donelson's [Immigration Group](#) for more information.

**Antonio Garofalo, a paralegal at Baker Donelson, contributed to this article and is not admitted to the practice of law.*