

Coronavirus – all travel corridors suspended

Following identification of a new variant of Covid-19 in Brazil, The Scottish Government will impose additional restrictions on arrivals.

From 4.00am on Monday, all exemptions from self-isolation after international travel will be suspended.

This follows the UK Government's announcement to act together so that this is in force all over the UK.

Passengers travelling to Scotland from outside the Common Travel Area will be required to isolate for ten days on return. They must also have a valid negative Covid-19 test result, taken no more than three days before the scheduled time of departure.

Most people from outside the CTA who meet the limited criteria to travel to Scotland will still require to undertake pre-departure tests and must have a valid negative COVID-19 test result taken no more than three days before the scheduled time of departure. This will be checked by operators, and passengers with a positive test result or an invalid certificate will be refused boarding. There will be fines for those who do not comply.

The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said that the UK Government will be stepping up enforcement of self-isolation requirements after international travel.

Mr Johnson said at Friday's press briefing: "It's precisely because we have the hope of that vaccine and the risk of new strains coming from overseas that we must take additional steps now to stop those strains from entering the country.

"Yesterday we announced that we're banning flights from South America and Portugal and to protect us against the risk from as-yet-unidentified strains we will also temporarily close all travel corridors from 04:00 on Monday.

"Following conversations with the devolved administrations we will act together so this applies across the whole of the UK."

It remains the case that travel to or from Scotland without a reasonable excuse is not permitted.

Limited exemptions for essential purposes will be maintained, but the list of sectoral exemptions to the restrictions will be tightened.

Transport Secretary Michael Matheson said: "International travel has played a key role in previous waves of coronavirus and is a significant risk to our efforts to suppress the virus to the lowest possible level. The emergence of these new variants mean we must think carefully about restrictions on travel.

"It is crucial we take the right steps to prevent importing new strains that can increase transmission or undermine the vaccine in Scotland.

"Travel into or out of Scotland is currently illegal and that will remain the case while we work to suppress the new strain of Covid-19. It remains the case that any travel must be for an essential reason.

"Everyone must stay at home as much as possible to minimise the risk of catching or spreading the virus."