

Coronavirus – new rules on pre-departure tests to come into effect on Friday

All passengers arriving in Scotland from 4am on Friday 15 January 2021 must have a valid Covid-19 test result, taken within 72 hours of their departure.

This will be checked on departure and anyone who does not have a valid certificate will be refused permission to board.

The necessary legislation to bring this rule into effect will be considered by The Scottish Parliament on Wednesday.

The pre-departure testing will not replace the need for self-isolation or quarantine for ten days on arrival in Scotland for those arriving from certain countries.

Transport Secretary Michael Matheson said: “Non-essential 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 and the requirement for pre-departure testing does not change this.

“The Scottish Government has been consistently clear about the risks associated with international travel and the importance of public health measures in helping to stop the spread of coronavirus. There is no doubt this measure, being implemented by administrations across the UK, provides an additional level of protection to guard against importation of

the virus and is absolutely essential to avoid further upsurges in infections.

“The requirement for pre-departure testing will add to our suite of public health measures as we seek to help drive down transmission of the virus to safeguard health, protect the NHS and save lives.”

Border Force will undertake spot checks of passengers arriving in Scotland as an additional measure to ensure compliance with PDT and will be able to apply a Fixed Penalty Notice of £480 if they identify travellers without a valid certificate.

Non-essential travel to or from Scotland is currently illegal and will not immediately change with the introduction of pre-departure testing.

A valid test result must be from a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, or another highly reliable test with at least 99% specificity and 97% sensitivity for detecting Covid-19; it must show the test was taken within three days of beginning the journey; and the result must be presented in English, French or Spanish. Children aged 10 and under are not required to take a test, and there are a very limited range of further exemptions that will be specified in regulations.