



UK Covid-19 pandemic crewing guidelines

GAC Services (UK) Ltd – Shipping Department



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1. Specific four nations guidelines

Detailed below is guidance for each UK nation, covering all latest general travel arrival and departure rules and regulations which have been implemented due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For each regulation (self-isolation, managed isolation, passenger locator forms, declaration forms for international travel and pre departure Covid testing), it is important to note there are exemptions for each category, and each country slightly differs in relation to its current seafarer / key worker exemption rules. Please ensure to check all latest guidance on UK Government sites thoroughly, the rules and regulations are being constantly changed and updated and this document is for guidance purposes only.

If a person travels to **Scotland** from anywhere outside of the UK or Republic of Ireland, they will need to go into [managed isolation](#). They must complete the [passenger locator form](#) if arriving by air, unless exempt from doing so within the exemptions list (detailed in paragraph below). If you arrive to Scotland from another home nation and have been in a ['non-acute at risk list country'](#) in the last 10 days you will be required to self-isolate at home or in own accommodation. All direct International Arrivals to Scotland need to go into managed isolation and must book before they arrive, unless exempt. If they have been in a country on the ['acute at risk list'](#) in the last 10 days arrivals must go into [managed isolation](#) for 10 days if they do not carry an exemption and can only fly directly into Glasgow, Edinburgh or Aberdeen. Arrivals to Scotland must also undertake a pre-departure Covid test no earlier than 72 hours before boarding flight if they do not qualify for seafarer exemption. International travel from Scotland is currently banned for reasons outside those that are essential such as work. If you arrive to Scotland from elsewhere in the Common Travel Area, and are not required to enter managed isolation, but are instead entering into a 10 day self-isolation period you will be required to pre book a COVID testing kit from the [Government website](#) at a cost of £210.

***In Scotland seafarers are exempt from self-isolation and pre-departure Covid testing if they are travelling to Scotland as part of their work. They are exempt from completing the passenger locator form if they travel on a part of a vessel or a vessel that does not carry passengers. As of 0400 on 20th March 2021 seafarers of all nationalities are exempt from managed isolation if arriving from an acute at-risk list country. They do not require a pre-departure Covid test under this new exemption, however some airlines / countries may insist on pre-departure covid test before boarding so you must check with local travel agent /airline before booking / boarding flight.*

Please note as of 27th March 2021 returning to Scotland for a period of leave from working on a vessel overseas no longer qualifies as 'travelling for work'. These seafarers must enter managed isolation on arrival to Scotland and will require pre departure COVID tests, unless signing off from a vessel port calling in the UK where they will remain exempt.



**There is some ambiguity here if you can travel firstly to England and then onwards to Scotland to avoid managed isolation per the Scottish guidelines. Neither Border Force or the Government provided us with a clear answer on if this is possible and directed us back to the standard website links. Therefore, unfortunately we cannot advise fully on this matter.*

If a person travels to **England** they will need to self-isolate ([managed quarantine](#) if arriving from a red list country). They must complete the [passenger locator form](#) if arriving by air, unless exempt from doing so within the exemptions list (detailed in paragraph below). Arrivals to England must also undertake a pre-departure Covid test no earlier than 72 hours before boarding flight if they do not qualify for seafarer exemption. International travel from England is currently banned for reasons outside those that are essential such as work. You must also fill in a [declaration form for international travel](#) before leaving the UK, unless exempt from doing so.

***In England [seafarers are exempt](#) from self-isolation, filling in the declaration form for international travel and pre-departure Covid Testing. They are exempt from completing the passenger locator form if they travel on a part of a vessel or a vessel that does not carry passengers. As of 0400 19th March 2021 seafarers of all nationalities are exempt from managed quarantine if arriving from a red list country. They do not require a pre-departure Covid test under this new exemption, however some airlines / countries may insist on pre-departure covid test before boarding so you must check with local travel agent /airline before booking / boarding flight.*

******From 6 April 2021 if arriving into England as a seafarer for more than 2 days before boarding a vessel, you are required to undertake lateral flow tests (LFTs) on days 2, 5 and 8. Constant travellers who enter and leave England on a daily basis, or at intervals of no greater than 2 days should undertake an LFT at least once every 3 days.***

If a person travels to **Wales** they will need to self-isolate ([managed quarantine](#) if arriving from a red list country) and must complete the [passenger locator form](#) if arriving by air, unless exempt from doing so within the exemptions list (detailed in paragraph below). Arrivals to Wales must also undertake a pre-departure Covid test no earlier than 72 hours before boarding flight if they do not qualify for seafarer exemption. International travel from Wales is currently banned for reasons outside those that are essential such as work. You must also fill in a [declaration form for international travel](#) before leaving the UK, unless exempt from doing so.

***In Wales [seafarers are exempt](#) from self-isolation, filling in the declaration form for international travel and pre-departure Covid Testing. Seafarers are not exempt from completing the passenger locator form. As of 0400 20th March 2021 seafarers of all nationalities are exempt from managed quarantine if arriving from a red list country (via a UK port entry airport). However, the rules suggest they may still require a pre-departure Covid test if arriving from a red list country. Please check with local travel agent /airline before booking / boarding flight as to the correct requirements.*



If a person travels to **Northern Ireland** they will need to [self-isolate](#) (or managed isolation if arriving via Great Britain or Republic of Ireland, from a red list country) and must complete the [passenger locator form](#) if arriving by air, unless exempt from doing so within the exemptions list (detailed in paragraph below). Arrivals to Northern Ireland must also undertake a pre-departure Covid test no earlier than 72 hours before boarding flight if they do not qualify for seafarer exemption. International travel from Northern Ireland is currently banned for reasons outside those that are essential such as work.

***In Northern Ireland [seafarers are exempt](#) from self-isolation and pre-departure Covid Testing. They are exempt from completing the passenger locator form if they travel on a part of a vessel or a vessel that does not carry passengers. Seafarers can now arrive to Northern Ireland (via approved port of entry in UK) from a red list location and are exempt from Self Isolation and pre departure Covid test. When onward travelling from approved UK port entry to Northern Ireland please ensure to check with Travel agent/Ship Agent for latest exemption regulations.*

The full list of exemptions for each nation are detailed in the following links: [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) & [Northern Ireland](#)

****Please note all [‘Travel corridors’](#) were temporarily suspended from 18 January 2021.**

As mentioned above there are also some country specific travel bans in place (with little to no exemptions in most cases) for people travelling to the four nations (links to each countries list are below) due to new strains of the virus, such as Denmark in December and Portugal in January (both now removed from lists) and currently (March 2021) South Africa, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, most of South America and others. We strongly recommend following the latest rules in place for the countries your crew are flying from (and ensuring they have not been in or transited countries that have been hit with severe restrictions as even transiting any of these countries will detrimentally affect crew joining a vessel in the UK).

From 0400 on 19th March 2021 in England/Northern Ireland and at 0400 on 20th March 2021 in Scotland and Wales, seafarers can now arrive to the UK from the red/acute at risk list of countries and would be exempt from enforced quarantine or managed isolation. We would strongly recommend checking with travel agent before travel and advising local GAC ship agency in UK so they can liaise with Border Force re any crew arriving from a red/acute at risk list country to ensure as smooth a passage as possible.

Latest related links to travel ban lists: [Scotland Acute at Risk list](#), [England Red List](#), [Wales Red list](#) & [Northern Ireland Red list](#)

2. Gibraltar

The Government of Gibraltar (GoG) has announced additional restrictions on travel to Gibraltar due to Covid-19. See the [GoG Press Release](#) for full details. Only the following categories of passengers are currently allowed to enter Gibraltar by air:

1. Individuals who are registered Gibraltarians, either by birth or naturalisation;
2. Individuals with residence in Gibraltar, upon demonstrating satisfactory proof of residence;
3. Seafarers on transit to a vessel which is berthed at Gibraltar and has immigration pre-clearance letter issued by the Borders and Coastguards Agency;
4. Spanish nationals who are in transit to Spain;
5. Individuals travelling to Gibraltar on transit to Spain and who hold lawful residence in Spain, upon demonstrating satisfactory proof of residence;
6. People who are carrying out a work activity in Gibraltar or who are taking up employment in Gibraltar and who provide proof on arrival;
7. Military personnel who have been issued with Travel Orders;
8. Individuals who hold an electronic letter issued by the Borders and Coastguard Agency granting that individual permission to enter Gibraltar.

In addition, travellers must present a negative PCR test obtained within the previous 72 hours or take a fast test on arrival at Gibraltar Airport.

If you arrive in Gibraltar by land, air or sea and you have been to a '[relevant area](#)' in the last 14 days you are required by law to report to the Gibraltar Borders and Coastguard Agency (if arriving by land or sea) or Gibraltar Port Authority (if arriving by sea).

A 'relevant area' is a country, area or territory outside of the European Union, but doesn't include the UK, Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican. It also excludes the list of countries included in the Schedule (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, New Zealand, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, and China).

If you have been in a 'relevant area' in the last 14 days, it is required that you:

- Self-isolate for five days. If you are staying in a hotel, you must remain in your room and not use any of the public areas.
- Do not use public transportation with the exception of a Gibraltar Taxi booked via the Gibraltar Taxi Association. You are required to inform them that you have arrived from a 'relevant area'. Call the local Gibraltar health line phone number 111 as soon as you reach the address where you will be isolating.
- If you develop symptoms or feel unwell call 111 immediately even if you have been swabbed.
- You must be swabbed on Day 1 and again on Day 5.



- If you are not registered with the Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA) you must arrange a private swab.

On 22 September 2020 the Government of Gibraltar introduced a COVID-19 [contact tracing online passenger locator and 'relevant area form'](#) for passengers flying to Gibraltar. It is a legal requirement to complete a passenger locator form and inform the authorities if you have been in a 'relevant area' in the 14 days before your arrival in Gibraltar. You will only be able to complete this form once you have checked in and have been allocated your seat number.

If you are arriving on a flight at Gibraltar International Airport, you will need to fill in a passenger locator form online before you can pass through customs. The form will then be sent to you with a unique barcode via email. This will be scanned by the Gibraltar Borders and Coastguard Agency upon arrival. The form and further information can be found on the [Government of Gibraltar website](#).

3. Passenger Locator Forms

According to the [latest guidelines](#) seafarers arriving to **England, Scotland and Northern Ireland** need to complete [the passenger locator form](#) before travelling to the UK, if they travel in a part of the vessel that is accessible to any passenger for any part of the journey.

You do not need to complete the passenger locator form if you travel in a part of the vessel that is not accessible to passengers or you travel on a vessel that does not carry passengers, for example, fishing boats. You do not need to complete for departure.

If travelling to / from **Wales** you must complete the passenger locator form as seafarers are not exempt from this requirement.

We have seen a few instances recently when local Border Forces have requested the forms for offsigning marine and project crew so it may be recommendable to continue to complete passenger locator forms **for both arrival/departure UK by air** to avoid any possible delays/fines.

4. UK departure form

From 8th March 2021, when departing from England and Wales to an international destination you need to complete [a declaration form for international travel](#). This was announced and implemented within 3 days so there may be some initial confusion surrounding exemptions for completing this (seafarers are officially exempt). We strongly advise that alongside carrying seafarer documentation, such as Seaman's book, crew also have [the link to the exemptions site](#) saved on mobile devices to show the exemption should it be questioned.

Legally permitted reasons for international travel from England include:

- work



- volunteering
- education
- medical, or compassionate grounds
- weddings, funerals, and related events

This is not currently in place across Scotland and Northern Ireland. International travel is still banned from these nations unless you have a valid and essential reason for travelling such as work.

5. Pre-departure Covid-19 test

From 0400 on the 18th January if you are arriving into the UK by air you must present a negative Covid test taken no earlier than 72 hours before you begin your journey to the below specification:

The test must:

- meet performance standards of $\geq 97\%$ specificity, $\geq 80\%$ sensitivity at viral loads above 100,000 copies/ml
- this could include tests such as:
 - a nucleic acid test, including a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test or derivative technologies, including loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) tests
 - an antigen test, such as a test from a lateral flow device

Please note seafarers with a valid SID are currently exempt from testing requirement per the exemptions section in this document (7). However, we strongly advise checking with airlines and/or your travel agent (especially if arriving from a red/acute at risk list country) as there may be additional regulations that apply in the departure country or you may be flying through a country that requires a negative test even for transit to allow boarding.

In Scotland seafarers that are returning to Scotland for a “period of leave” will not be exempt from this requirement if arriving into Scotland by air or not on a contract within the common travel area.

Latest related links regarding pre-testing: [Scotland](#), [England](#), [Wales](#) & [Northern Ireland](#)

6. Self-isoation

Providing a negative test result before you arrive to the UK does not change any regulations on self-isolation or quarantine. Unless you are in the exempt category (more details in section 7), self-isolation is still required if arriving at the UK, and quarantine requirements are detailed further in this section.

From the 15th February 2021 new regulations were put in place for [enforced quarantine in hotels](#) on arrival to the UK, these differ per country but basic understanding is:



If you are travelling from a country that is on the travel ban list, you will be refused entry at the border unless you are a UK or Irish national, have residency status in the UK, or qualify for one of the sectorial exemptions (including seafarers as of March 2021).

In Scotland this [managed isolation](#) is for arrival from any country except when arriving from another part of the UK or Ireland. There are a number of exemptions from managed isolation if arriving from non acute at risk list countries (including seafarers). There are fewer exemptions from enforced quarantine if arriving from a country on the acute at risk list (As of March 2021, all nationalities of seafarers arriving to England, Wales and Northern Ireland are exempted from managed isolation and permitted to arrive if they have been in these countries. For Scotland, the exemption applies if you are travelling to Scotland for work, if you are arriving to Scotland from overseas for a period of leave you are no longer exempt from entering managed isolation, however if offsigning from a UK port call you remain exempt.

If arriving from a red list or an acute at-risk list country or have been in or transited a country on these lists, you can only fly into a select number of UK airports listed below unless you have a job exemption and are not entering quarantine such as a seafarer. Please check with your travel agent before flying, below are currently classed as ports of entry:

England – London Gatwick, London Heathrow, London City, Birmingham, Farnborough

Scotland – Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen

Northern Ireland – cannot arrive directly to Northern Irish airport if you have been in a red list location, you must first arrive to an airport approved above.

Wales – cannot arrive directly to Welsh airport if you have been in a red list location, you must first arrive to an airport approved above.

****It is very important to note that in the time between the seafarer arriving to the UK and joining the vessel, they should be in self isolation in a hotel if not going directly to the vessel on arrival****

Latest related links regarding Self-isolation: [Scotland](#), [England](#), [Wales](#) & [Northern Ireland](#)

7. COVID Testing while in the UK

New rules came into force in April 2021 for testing when arriving to the UK. These differ depending on the country you arrive at, which countries you have arrived from and transited through, and the exemption category you are seeking.

In Scotland for those not entering managed isolation on arrival due to arriving from the Common Travel Area you must book testing online via the [Government Approved Quarantine site](#). For more check [Scottish Government website](#).



In England there is now a [bespoke testing regime in place](#) for exempt groups. The type of test that you will require may depend on the job you do and whether that test needs to be a PCR test on days 2 and 8 or an LFT test on days 2,5 and 8. The specifics on the testing required is noted on the [job exemptions pages](#) for each particular job sector.

8. Seafarer exemptions

Based on the exemptions list for each country seafarers are mainly exempt from self-isolation, managed isolation / quarantine (including now arriving from a red list or acute at risk list country into England, Wales and Northern Ireland and if travelling to Scotland for work(travelling for a period of leave you must enter managed isolation in Scotland)) and providing a pre departure negative Covid-19 test (except currently Wales, please double check and confirm before travel). They are also exempt from arrival passenger locator forms (except in Wales) if you travel in a part of the vessel that is not accessible to passengers or travel on a vessel that does not carry passengers, for example, fishing boats. They are also exempt from having to complete the departure declaration form for international travel for leaving the UK from England or Wales for a destination outside of the UK.

Latest related links regarding exemptions lists and guidelines: [Scotland](#), [England](#), [Wales](#) & [Northern Ireland](#).

We strongly recommend checking the latest guidelines and requirements with your local travel agent and airlines before travel to ensure smooth embarkation and arrival to join a vessel in the UK. Crew will need to provide proof of exemption such as seafarers identity book or declaration from the registered owners of the vessel that they are a crew member.

Travellers, if required, need to have the completed passenger locator form on them (printed or on phone) to show at Border Force. If a person works on a ship, including fishermen, they need to show a Seafarers Identification Document (SID) if they have one.

If they do not have a SID, they can show joining papers, seafarer's employment agreement or a seafarer's discharge book (Continuous Certificate of Discharge) instead. Alternatively, they could show a basic training certificate or declaration from the registered owners of the vessel that they are a crew member.

8.1 What if a person is joining the ship as a Superintendent or part of a mobilisation/demobilisation team?

Unfortunately, unless a person has a relevant seafarer's identification document, they would not qualify for exemption from managed quarantine or self-isolation. However, if you believe the person is critical to the vessel's needs please contact your local GAC



agency where the port call is occurring, and they will consult with Border Force on your behalf.

Again, unless holding a seafarer's identification document the person would not qualify for exemption from pre-departure Covid testing requirements. We strongly recommend any advice on this is taken from travel agent or airline.

If the person is joining the vessel as project crew, please see the section on workers relating to oil and gas infrastructure.

*If unsure about any of the rules relating to this particular type of worker, please ensure to check with travel agent/airline before travelling.

8.2 Are Inspectors or Surveyor of ships exempt?

Yes, if an inspector or surveyor of ships is appointed under section 256 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 they should be exempt from self-isolation and managed quarantine. They will not be exempt from Managed Isolation in Scotland if not travelling for work. However, please check with your local GAC agency office who can confirm with Border Force.

The person will need to provide journey and contact details and should not need to self-isolate or enter quarantine for 10 days (unless arriving into Scotland and "not travelling for work"). They should show a Seafarers Identification Document (SID) if they have one. If they do not have a SID, they can show joining papers, seafarer's employment agreement or a seafarer's discharge book (Continuous Certificate of Discharge) instead.

Inspectors or Surveyors of ships should be exempt from the need to undertake a pre-departure Covid test (except if arriving to Wales or if arriving to Scotland and not "travelling for work"). We strongly advise checking this with your travel agent and/or airline before you fly to the UK.

*If unsure about any of the rules relating to this particular type of worker, please ensure to check with travel agent/airline before travelling.

8.3 Are workers involved in the continued safe and secure operation, maintenance and essential support services for offshore oil and gas infrastructure in the UK exempt?

No, these personnel are generally not exempt from self-isolation and managed quarantine unless they satisfy the requirements under the differing exemption lists on the Government websites. They will need to complete the [passenger locator form](#) and will need to self isolate or enter quarantine/managed isolation unless they qualify not to under the exemption lists. They will also need to complete the declaration form for international travel from if they are leaving from England or Wales for a destination outside of the UK.



They will not be exempt from pre-departure Covid testing and will need to undertake this no earlier than 72 hours before their journey to the UK begins. They will need to show a letter from their company at the border which includes:

- personal details, such as name and address
- contact details for employer
- explanation of work to be carried out

If they have employer issued photo identification, they should bring this also.

*If unsure about any of the rules relating to this particular type of worker, please ensure to check with travel agent/airline before travelling.

8.4 Are persons transiting through the UK i.e. travelling home via the UK from another location exempt?

Yes, they will be exempt from self-isolation and managed quarantine if not passing border control, however if passing border control (i.e. change of airport in UK or overnight hotel stay before onward flight) please liaise with your local GAC agency office to ensure compliance with any laws and guidelines for entering the UK and what will be required from a self-isolation regulation.

They will need to provide journey and contact details. They should not need to self-isolate for 10 days as only transiting via the UK. They will not need to show anything as will not pass through the UK border.

In order to transit the UK you will have to have a pre departure COVID test.

*If unsure about any of the rules relating to this particular type of worker, please ensure to check with travel agent/airline before travelling.

8.5 Are Project crew/company visitors exempt?

Project crew/company visitors travelling from outside the UK, that are not departing with the vessel but just visiting, whilst alongside will not be classed as exempt personnel unless they qualify as a different profession (such as a seafarer) listed in the UK Government exemptions list.

Project Crew departing with the vessel, if classed as essential workers per the guidance will qualify for exemption and will not be required to self-isolate but will be required to fill out [passenger locator form](#). These workers will also need to complete the declaration form for international travel from if they are leaving from England or Wales for a destination outside of the UK.

Visitors **will not** be exempt from undertaking a pre-departure Covid test unless they qualify under another role per the exemptions list.



*If unsure about any of the rules relating to this particular type of worker, please ensure to check with travel agent/airline before travelling.

9. Summary

These rules have been specifically introduced due to Covid-19 and are not to be confused with other UK Immigration laws. For guidance on Immigration laws in the UK please speak to your local GAC agency office who can advise on requirements for crew arriving at or departing the UK.

This document has been produced by GAC UK as *guidelines only* to the UK Government rules which are being changed and updated on a very regular basis. If there is any doubt or you have any questions, please contact your local GAC agent who can assist and liaise with Border Force for any clarification.

****Incorrect submissions or failure to submit any necessary travel forms will result in financial penalties. It is your responsibility to ensure your crew/staff are following all the latest travel rules. GAC UK cannot be held responsible for any breaches. We act as agents only and have produced this as an advisory document only for our customers.**

10. Useful Links

General travel advice

England - [Travel advice: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Scotland - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): international travel and managed isolation](#)

Wales – [Travel: coronavirus](#)

N. Ireland - [Coronavirus-covid-19 regulations guidance travel](#)

Managed Isolation / Quarantine

[Scotland](#), [England](#), [Wales](#) & [Northern Ireland](#)

Passenger Locator forms

All four UK nations use same form - [passenger locator form](#)

Gibraltar - [online passenger locator and 'relevant area form'](#)



Red List / Acute At Risk List

[Scotland Acute at Risk list](#), [England Red List](#), [Wales Red list](#) & [Northern Ireland Red list](#)

Exemptions lists

[England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) & [Northern Ireland](#)

Declaration form for International travel (departures)

Applies England & Wales only - [declaration form for international travel](#)

Covid-19 pre-arrival testing information

[Scotland](#), [England](#), [Wales](#) & [Northern Ireland](#)