



COVID-19 – Standards for Mandatory Quarantine Order of Vaccinated Primary Contacts

Applicability

The following standards are issued under the Public Health Act Chapter 465 of the Laws of Malta, and require strict adherence. Failure to adhere to these standards will result in enforcement procedures, as provided by the Act.

In terms of LN 332 of 2021 ‘Period of Quarantine (Contact with other persons) (Amendment) Order, 2021, of the 16th August 2021, the Superintendent of Public Health hereby orders *that any person who comes in contact with a person diagnosed as suffering from COVID-19 infectious disease must submit oneself to a fourteen (14) day period of quarantine immediately upon receiving an oral or written order, as the case may be, from the Superintendent of Public Health: Provided that the Superintendent of Public Health may, in her absolute discretion, suspend the provisions of this order or provide for other conditions, by means of standards issued for this purpose, where, in the opinion of the Superintendent of Public Health, the quarantine of certain persons providing an essential service or persons in possession of a vaccination certificate shall be for a period of less than fourteen (14) days or subject to different conditions.*

Quarantine requirements of vaccinated Primary Contacts

The term ‘Primary Contact’ refers to any person who has been identified by the Contact Tracing Team within the Covid-19 Public Health Response Team as having been at high risk of viral transmission following contact with or exposure to a person diagnosed as suffering from COVID-19 infectious disease.

The Primary Contact and all other persons living at the same residence are required to stay in quarantine for up to 14 days from the latest Primary Contact’s exposure to the COVID-19 case, as confirmed through a PCR test or Rapid Antigen Test as the case may be. The exact period and duration

of quarantine is determined by the Contact Tracing Team, and is clearly stated in the notice of mandatory quarantine that is sent via email or post to the Primary Contact.

Early release from quarantine

Persons identified as Primary Contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19 who are in possession of a valid vaccination certificate recognised by the Superintendent of Public Health are eligible for early release from quarantine following a 'non-reactive' (negative) COVID-19 test carried out by appointment at a designated swabbing center, subject to the conditions outlined below.

Even after the test is performed, vaccinated Primary Contacts and persons living in the same residence are to remain in quarantine until they receive an official notice of early release from quarantine.

Eligibility criteria

Primary Contacts' early release from quarantine is subject to fulfilment of ALL of the following conditions:

- They are in possession of a valid COVID-19 vaccination certificate* recognised by the Superintendent of Public Health;
- They are not in quarantine due to travel to Malta as per the '[Standards](#) for the quarantine of travellers entering the Maltese Islands';
- None of the residents in the Primary Contact's household are themselves unvaccinated Primary Contacts who had also exposure to a positive case of COVID-19, and were therefore also placed in mandatory quarantine;
- None of the residents in the household have had subsequent exposure to another positive case of COVID-19. These standards do not apply if any of the other residents in the vaccinated Primary Contact's household have received another quarantine letter with a later date;
- Neither the Primary Contact, nor any of the residents in the household, have tested positive for COVID-19 during their quarantine period;
- The person is not a household contact of a case; AND
- No one has joined the household and has since tested positive for COVID-19.

Should any of the above conditions not be met, the Primary Contact **and all members of the household** are required to remain in mandatory quarantine for the full 14 days specified in the official notice of mandatory quarantine.

Should a Primary Contact or any person residing at the same residence of a Primary Contact undergo a swab test during the quarantine period and result positive, then all household contacts of the positive case (even if fully vaccinated) will be required to restart their mandatory quarantine for another 14 days, starting from the day the latest household member tests positive.

Exclusion criteria

These standards are **not applicable** for the following persons:

- Vaccinated or unvaccinated positive cases
- Members of the household of positive cases
- Primary Contacts who are not yet in possession of a valid vaccination certificate*
- Unvaccinated Primary Contacts
- Persons living in institutions
- Travelers to Malta, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, who are not Primary Contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case but are in quarantine in line with the '[Standards](#) for the quarantine of travellers entering the Maltese Islands'

*Primary Contacts who are not in possession of a recognised valid vaccination certificate are not eligible for early release from quarantine and have to complete the full 14-day quarantine period together with any other person living in the same residence (even if these are fully vaccinated). In such situations, the 14-day quarantine applies irrespective of any negative swab test result obtained during the quarantine period.

Vaccination certificate

A valid vaccination certificate is one that is recognised by the Superintendent of Public Health for a full course of vaccination (2 doses or 1 dose of a single dose vaccine) with EMA approved vaccines (Comirnaty [Pfizer], Janssen [Johnson & Johnson], Spikevax [Moderna], Vaxzevria [AstraZeneca]), that are authorized by the national regulatory authority of the administering country, and 14 days have passed since the last dose. The list of approved vaccine certificates is available on www.traveltomalta.gov.mt and will be updated from time to time.

Testing for early release from quarantine

Testing criteria

Testing can only be performed by appointment on or after a date indicated in the quarantine letter at designated testing centres authorized by Public Health Authorities for this purpose. The contact tracing team will provide instructions on how to book an appointment and indicate the swabbing date on the quarantine letter. The test can only be performed if at least 7 days have passed from the Primary Contact's last exposure to the person diagnosed as suffering from COVID-19 infectious disease.

Tests taken in the private sector, as well as tests done in other public centres not authorised for the purpose of release of vaccinated Primary Contacts, are not recognized for the purposes of early release from quarantine. If vaccinated Primary Contacts get tested elsewhere, they will not receive an official email stating that they have been released from quarantine and will remain subject to enforcement checks and liable to fines.

Testing procedure

Only a vaccinated Primary Contact can book an appointment to get tested on the date indicated on their notice of mandatory quarantine (i.e. Day 7 from exposure or later) for the purpose of early release from quarantine. Instructions for booking will be provided by the Contact Tracing Team and in the notice of mandatory quarantine that is sent to the Primary Contact.

Transport

Public transport CANNOT be used to attend the swabbing appointment. However, one's own transport or taxis/cabs can be used to attend appointments at the designated testing centre at the time booked.

Documentation

The following documents (paper or online copy) will be required at the designated testing centre on the day of the appointment:

- a. A valid vaccination certificate
- b. The notice of mandatory quarantine issued by the Public Health Authorities, where the Primary Contact's name is clearly stated
- c. Proof of identity (ID card, Residence card or Passport)

These documents will be checked and verified at the testing centre before testing can take place. Failure to show these documents when requested to do so by personnel at the testing centre will automatically render the appointment invalid, and no testing will take place.

Testing for other reasons

Should any quarantined person undergo a swab test during the quarantine period for another reason (e.g. because the person developed symptoms) and result positive, then all household contacts of the positive case (even if fully vaccinated) will be required to restart their mandatory quarantine for another 14 days, starting from the day of the positive result. There will not be a possibility for early release from quarantine.

Results and release from quarantine

The Primary Contact will be sent an email with the swab test result and a separate email outlining whether early release from quarantine is applicable. A vaccinated Primary Contact and persons living at the same residence are to remain in quarantine and **cannot leave their residence** until they receive an email that releases the Primary Contact from quarantine.

'Non-reactive' (negative) test result

The Primary Contact will be eligible for early release from quarantine **the day after their test** (i.e. Day 8 or later) upon receiving a 'non-reactive' (negative) test result AND an official discharge email. Any secondary contacts listed on the notice of mandatory quarantine (as issued by the Contact Tracing Team) are also released from quarantine on the same day.

'Reactive' (positive) test result

If the test result is 'reactive' and therefore positive for COVID-19, then the Primary Contact and all those in the same household will restart the quarantine period from the day of the positive test result. This period of quarantine will last for 14 days, and there will not be a possibility for early release from quarantine. this is independent of the vaccination status.

Persons symptomatic while in quarantine

Any individuals in quarantine who experience potential COVID-19 symptoms are required to contact the COVID-19 helpline on 111 (or +356 2132 4086 from a foreign number) for a swab test.

Timeline

Day 0: day of last exposure to/contact with positive case. This is the start date of quarantine period as indicated in the notice of mandatory quarantine

Day 1: the day after the last exposure to the positive case

Day 7 or later: testing date (as indicated in the notice of mandatory quarantine), subject to conditions outlined above

Day 8 or later: day of release from quarantine (from 00:00), subject to receiving a negative test result and an official email notifying early release from quarantine.

Day 14: last day of quarantine if no test is booked, up until 23:59

Day 15: no longer in quarantine (from 00:00 onwards)