

Remarks
The Hon Kim Wilson, JP, MP
Minister of Health
9 June 2022

Good morning.

Today, I am happy to provide an update on the Travel Authorisation process and some of the most recent changes that we have made.

You will recall the Premier stated in January of this year that Bermuda's Travel Authorisation (TA), which has served us well since commercial flights resumed in July 2020, will be in place until March 2023. I can confirm the Government's position in this regard is unchanged.

However, we continue to work with our stakeholders to improve the process.

- All travellers can start the TA process up to 30 days before their departure date. They can go online, fill out the form, upload the vaccination certificate and pay \$40. Applying for a TA early is strongly recommended.
- All travellers will initially receive a 'pending review' response, and then, later, an email is sent closer to their travel date reminding them to upload their negative test result. The TA review is completed once the test is uploaded, and at that point the traveller receives a final response.
- Residents who do not intend to upload a pre-arrival test will receive an approved TA based on their vaccination certificate, and they will be tested on arrival at the LF Wade International Airport.
- Cruise passengers with Norwegian, Royal Caribbean and Carnival Cruise Lines – who are the majority of our cruise visitors – will get an approved TA based on their vaccination certificates. Their negative test result is checked at the pier when they board the ship, and they do not need to upload it.
- TAs are prioritised as follows: for air arrivals, by arrival date; for sea arrivals, by departure date.

The Bermuda Travel Authorization is relatively easy to fill out. It helps to verify travellers' personal information and travel details, and more importantly, it confirms that travellers coming to Bermuda are not COVID positive.

I cannot stress enough that we are still in a pandemic. There are still coronavirus related hospitalisations, there are still outbreaks in our community, and we continue to see many travel-related cases.

While most travellers do not have an issue with the TAs, we recognise that, as the much-welcomed visitor arrivals increase, there are some challenges and delays causing anxiety for those affected travellers.

We have found that most delays are with passengers applying at the last minute – some completing their TAs on the evening before their travel or whilst at the airport on their day of travel in hopes of receiving their TA approval on short notice.

Travellers can avoid being denied boarding by applying for their Travel Authorisation at least two days before your day of departure but no later than 24hrs before. Travel documents are reviewed daily between 8 am and 8 pm. Do not wait to apply for your TA on your day of travel.

The commencement of the cruise ship season has considerably increased the volume of TA applications. We have worked with the Ministry of Transport and our cruise ship partners to develop the alternative I mentioned for their passengers' TAs. In addition, we have assisted in reviewing their communications with their guests to ensure smooth embarkations on the day of departure. I would like to thank my Transport colleagues for their support.

Before I end, there are three key things to remember about Travel Authorisations:

- They are there to protect our borders, to ensure we can catch any cases of Covid being imported. This protects both our visitors and residents.
- The TA scheme is vital to help fund the island's Covid-19 response. The TAs pay for the pandemic support they provide; testing at the borders, return testing for visitors travelling to or through the United States (much cheaper than most countries charge for departure tests), case management for those who test positive and the associated administration.
- The TA also captures information used by the Bermuda Tourism Authority, the Department of Immigration and HM Customs.

The Ministry of Health will continue our work to simplify the TA application – more improvements are in the pipeline already. We collaborate daily with our partners and stakeholders to resolve any issues quickly.