



**Including updates on the
new COVID-19 E-Certificates
for Travel!**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) COVID-19 INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PROCEDURES TO/FROM SIERRA LEONE UPDATED 10TH JUNE, 2021

NOTE: This document may be updated as the situation changes. Please check you are referring to the latest version.

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INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL & HIGH-RISK COUNTRIES

1. Can international travellers still travel from/to Sierra Leone?

Yes, Sierra Leone’s land borders and Lungi International Airport are open for international travel; there are no travel bans in place at this time. However, all international travellers, whether Sierra Leonean or foreign nationals, must comply with the strict COVID-19 departure and arrival protocols (see Questions 4, 5, 22, 24) put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and protect Sierra Leone from increased COVID-19 cases and new COVID-19 variants which could be more transmissible and difficult to control.

To further protect Sierra Leone from new COVID-19 variants, NaCOVERC advises against all but essential travel to countries considered by NaCOVERC to be high-risk, and has put in place additional COVID-19 arrival protocols for people who have been in these countries in the past 14 days (see Question 24).

2. Which countries are considered by NaCOVERC to be high-risk and why?

The specific countries considered by NaCOVERC to be high-risk will constantly change as national COVID-19 outbreaks and situations evolve and new data and evidence emerges. When deciding whether a country is considered to be high-risk or not, NaCOVERC will look at three main things:

- Whether that country has a hundred or more COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people
- Whether that country has had a sudden increase in COVID-19 cases of more than 50%
- Whether that country has a COVID-19 variant of concern according to WHO and CDC.

3. I have to travel to a country considered by NaCOVERC to be high-risk, how can I stay safe?

- Get fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before traveling
- Follow all universal prevention precautions for COVID-19, including:
 - o Wearing a mask over nose and mouth at all times when in public
 - o Avoiding crowds and staying at least 1 meter from others
 - o Washing hands frequently or using hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol)
 - o Seeking immediate help on if you have COVID-19 symptoms or contact with a COVID-19 case.

TRAVELLING OUT OF SIERRA LEONE BY LAND

4. I plan to travel out of Sierra Leone by land, what should I expect at the land border?

You can travel to the border as normal but when you reach the border you should expect to go through a health screening process (including temperature check and health questionnaire) before you can pass into Guinea or Liberia. To complete the health questionnaire, you must be able to give your phone number, the address for where you are going, and the phone number of someone who can be contacted in case of an emergency.

TRAVELLING OUT OF SIERRA LEONE BY AIR

COVID-19 DEPARTURE PROTOCOLS FOR ALL OUTBOUND PASSENGERS

5. I plan to travel out of Sierra Leone by air, what are the steps I must take due to be fully compliant with Sierra Leone's COVID-19 departure protocols?

Once you have purchased your air ticket(s) you must:

1. register on the online travel portal at www.travel.gov.sl to receive a unique SO (Sierra Leone Outbound) number
2. as instructed by the travel portal, make a payment via mobile money for your COVID-19 test to be conducted in Sierra Leone
3. have a PCR test for COVID-19 at an approved location *no more than 72 hours* before the departure time of your flight from Sierra Leone (See Questions 8, 9, 10)
4. download your negative COVID-19 test certificate from the travel portal (See Questions 14 and 15).

These steps must be followed by all outbound passengers over the age of 5 years old. (See Questions 6 and 7).

6. Do all outbound passengers have to be tested for COVID-19 before travelling out of Sierra Leone?

According to Sierra Leone's COVID-19 departure protocols, the only groups who do not have to be tested for COVID-19 before travelling out of Sierra Leone are:

- travellers who are under 5 years old
- travellers who flew into the country less than five days before their departure date.

However, while these groups are exempt from needing negative COVID-19 certificates in order to leave Sierra Leone, they may still need negative COVID-19 certificates in order to enter another country. It is up to individual outbound passengers to look up the COVID-19 entry requirements for the country they are travelling to and ensure they meet these requirements (for example, some countries require negative COVID-19 certificates for all travellers over 2 years old). Failure to do so may result in passengers being allowed to leave Sierra Leone, but stopped from boarding their flight to another country, by airline officials.

7. I have received a COVID-19 vaccine, do I still need to be tested before travelling out of Sierra Leone?

Yes, all outbound passengers (unless exempt – see Question 6) must take the required COVID-19 tests for departure from Sierra Leone, regardless of their vaccine status. It is still possible that a vaccinated version can carry and spread the COVID-19 virus, even if they themselves are less likely to get seriously sick from it.

8. When should I go for my COVID-19 test before travelling out of Sierra Leone?

Tests must be conducted no more than 72 hours before your flight departure time. It is advisable to go for your test approximately 48 hours before your flight departure time as most countries require negative COVID-19 certificates from tests conducted within 72 hours or even less, of arrival time (see Important note below). Test results take 24-48 hours. It is your responsibility to go for your COVID-19 test with enough time before your flight so that your results (and certificate, if negative) will be ready before you fly. It is also your responsibility to check the requirements for the country you are travelling to (see Important note below).

You will not be allowed to leave Sierra Leone without a negative COVID-19 certificate. The table below shows when certificates will be available and when they will expire according to when test was conducted.

TEST CONDUCTED	CERTIFICATE AVAILABLE	CERTIFICATE VALID UNTIL
Monday (by 1pm)	Earliest: Tuesday Latest: Wednesday	Thursday (same time as time swab taken)
Tuesday (by 1pm)	Earliest: Wednesday Latest: Thursday	Friday (same time as time swab taken)
Wednesday (by 1pm)	Earliest: Thursday Latest: Friday	Saturday (same time as time swab taken)
Thursday (by 1pm)	Earliest: Friday Latest: Saturday	Sunday (same time as time swab taken)
Friday (by 1pm)	Earliest: Saturday Latest: Sunday	Monday (same time as time swab taken)
Saturday (by 1pm)	Earliest: Sunday Latest: Monday	Tuesday (same time as time swab taken)
Sunday (by 1pm)	Earliest: Monday Latest: Tuesday	Wednesday (same time as time swab taken)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Remember, no more than 72 hours before the flight departure time is Sierra Leone’s COVID-19 departure protocol, the country you are travelling to may have its own entry requirements regarding when your COVID-19 test should have been done in relation to when you arrive. For example, some countries require negative COVID-19 certificates from tests conducted no more than 72 hours, or even 48 hours, before you arrive. It is up to you to look these requirements up and factor them in when deciding when to go for your test (If the country you are going to requires negative COVID-19 certificates from tests conducted very close to the flight arrival time, see Question 9).

9. The country I am travelling to requires me to have a negative COVID-19 test certificate from a test conducted very close to the flight arrival time, or for passengers who are under 5 years old, what do I do?

If the country you are travelling to requires you to have a negative COVID-19 test certificate from a test conducted very close to the flight arrival time (i.e. within 48 or 24 hours of the flight landing), or for passengers who are under 5 years old, you can call 117 or send an email to support@travel.gov.sl to make inquiries/request a special service.

10. Where can I go for a COVID-19 test before travelling out of Sierra Leone?

If you have applied online and selected the regular service, you can go for testing at one of the following approved locations on Monday – Saturday between the hours of 10am and 2pm:

- Western Area:
 - o Special Court (Western Area Urban)
 - o ADRA at Waterloo (Western Area Rural)
 - o District Health Management Team Cline Town, close to old Fourah Bay College (Eastern Area Urban)
- Other Districts:
 - o District Government Hospital

If you have paid for the premium service (only available to those in Western Area), you can choose where to be tested, but you must call 117 to book an appointment time and specify your preferred location. The healthcare worker will come to meet you at that time and place to do the test.

11. What do I need to have with me at the time of testing?

When you go for your test, you must have with you your unique I.D. number to show you have applied online at www.travel.gov.sl and proof of payment to show that you have already paid for your test via mobile money. The healthcare worker will check these before conducting your test.

12. What kind of test will be conducted?

The test that will be performed is a PCR test (diagnostic test) to screen for active COVID-19 infection. It is done by taking a nasal swab. The swab will be sent to the reference laboratory and analysed.

13. Is testing (for those travelling out of Sierra Leone by air) free?

No, testing for those travelling out of Sierra Leone by air is not free. One test costs SLL500,000. For those in Western Area who choose the premium service (which allows you to choose the location for your test), the cost is SLL700,000. Payment can be made via mobile money (Orange or Africell) and must be made *before* the test is conducted.

14. How will I get my test result?

Test results will be ready approximately 24-48 hours from the time when the swab was taken. If your test result is negative, your negative COVID-19 certificate will be uploaded to the travel portal so you can download it from there before you travel (see Question 15). If you test positive you will be visited by a healthcare worker who will give further guidance and instruction.

15. How do I download my negative COVID-19 certificate before I travel?

To download your negative COVID-19 certificate before you travel you must:

1. Go to www.travel.gov.sl
2. Click on the blue button that says 'Track Progress'
3. Enter your 5-digit SO number given to you when you registered. Make sure you type 'SO' before the number itself and without a space between the letters and the number.
4. Your name and details will come up, scroll down to 'Travel Information', if the certificate is available you will see a blue button that says 'Certificate'. Click on this to download your certificate.
5. Save or print your certificate.

You do not need to go to the Emergency Operations Centre before you travel.

16. Do I have to print my negative COVID-19 certificate before I travel?

You will need to show your negative COVID-19 certificate at Lungi International Airport. You can print your certificate and show the hardcopy at the airport, or, if you have a smart phone, you can show the downloaded certificate to the airport officials on your smart phone screen. However, if there is a chance your smart phone battery will not last for the entire journey, or the country you are travelling to requires hard-copy certificates on arrival, then you should print your certificate before travelling.

17. What will happen if I test positive?

If you test positive you will not be allowed to travel and will have to home-isolate or quarantine for two weeks and those you have been in contact with will be contacted. If you test positive and are sick or high-risk, a healthcare worker will discuss the best treatment options with you.

18. I was tested but did not receive my result, what do I do?

If more than 48 hours have passed and your negative COVID-19 certificate is not available on the travel portal, and you have not been visited by a healthcare worker, call 117 to enquire.

19. What will happen if I fail to comply with COVID-19 departure protocols?

If you do not have a unique SO number from the travel portal and a valid COVID-19 test certificate you will not be allowed to leave the country.

20. What should I do if I have technical difficulties register on the online travel portal or downloading and/or printing my COVID-19 certificate?

Call 117 or email support@travel.gov.sl

21. If I follow the above steps am I guaranteed entry to the country I am travelling to?

No, these are the steps you must take to be fully compliant with Sierra Leone's COVID-19 departure protocol, the country you are travelling to may have additional COVID-19 arrival protocol that you must satisfy and/or some travel bans in place. For example, some countries require negative COVID-19 test certificates for passengers over the age of 2 years old, negative COVID-19 test certificates from tests conducted within 48 or 24 hours of the flight landing, pre-booked mandatory quarantine or self-isolation on arrival, or have banned entry to passengers coming from specific countries. It is your responsibility to look up and ensure compliance with the arrival protocols for the country you are visiting.

TRAVELLING INTO SIERRA LEONE BY LAND

22. I plan to travel into Sierra Leone by land, what should I expect at the land border?

When you cross into Sierra Leone you should expect to go through a health screening process (including temperature check and health questionnaire). To complete the health questionnaire, you must be able to give your phone number, the address for where you are going, and the phone number of someone who can be contacted in case of an emergency.

TRAVELLING INTO SIERRA LEONE BY AIR

COVID-19 ARRIVAL PROTOCOLS FOR ALL INBOUND PASSENGERS

23. How will I know if I have been in a country (in the past 14 days) considered by NaCOVERC to be high-risk?

The airline you are flying with will be able to tell you, and you will also be notified when you register on the online travel portal before travelling. As well as letting you know if you have been in a country (in the past 14 days) considered by NaCOVERC to be high-risk, the travel portal will also let you know whether you will be required to quarantine in a NaCOVERC-approved hotel, or to self-quarantine.

24. I plan to travel into Sierra Leone by air, what are the steps I must take to be fully compliant with COVID-19 arrival protocols?

Once you have purchased your air ticket(s) you must:

- register on the online travel portal at www.travel.gov.sl to receive a unique I.D. number
- as instructed by the travel portal, make an online payment for your COVID-19 tests which will be conducted on arrival in Sierra Leone
- have a PCR test for COVID-19 at a certified laboratory no more than 72 hours before the departure time of your flight to Sierra Leone
- upload a negative PCR test certificate which contains all required information in English to the travel portal
- *If you have been in a country considered to be high-risk (in the past 14 days) and been informed that you must quarantine in a hotel:*
 - o Book into a NaCOVERC-approved hotel where you will quarantine for a minimum of 8 days on arrival to Sierra Leone
- *If you have been in a country deemed to be 'high-risk' (in the past 14 days) and been informed that you must self-quarantine:*
 - o Make arrangements to self-quarantine at a suitable location for a minimum of 8 days on arrival to Sierra Leone

These steps must be followed by all inbound passengers over the age of 5 years old. (See Questions 25-40).

25. I have received a COVID-19 vaccine, do I still need to be tested before travelling into Sierra Leone and on arrival?

Yes, all inbound passengers 5 years old and above must take the required COVID-19 tests for entry into Sierra Leone, regardless of their vaccine status. It is still possible that a vaccinated person can carry and spread the COVID-19 virus, even if they themselves are less likely to get seriously sick from it.

26. What information must be included in the negative PCR test certificate?

- The date and time the swab was taken.
- The name of the certified laboratory where the swab was analysed.
- A QR code linked to the original laboratory report.

27. What should I expect on arrival to Lungi International Airport?

On arrival all passengers will go through a COVID-19 screening process. Passenger temperatures will be taken and basic health and travel history questions asked; an airport official will check that all passengers over the age of 5 years old have registered and paid on the travel portal; and all passengers over the age of 5 years old will be tested for COVID-19 via two methods (an RDT test (rapid diagnostic test) and a PCR test (diagnostic test)).

Any passengers who have been in a country (in the past 14 days) considered by NaCOVERC to be high-risk (see Question 2), will be accompanied to their pre-booked/arranged NaCOVERC-approved hotel or self-quarantine location.

28. What happens if I receive a positive RDT test result at the airport?

If your RDT test is positive, you will be asked to quarantine at a facility near the airport until your PCR test result is available. You will be transported to the quarantine facility by ambulance or any other safe means of transport, and provided with modest social amenities during your short stay. You will receive your PCR test result from a healthcare worker within 24-72 hours.

If you are travelling with your children and a child or caregiver in your group tests positive, a healthcare worker will talk to you to make suitable arrangements for your family. Children will not be quarantined unless parental consent is given.

29. What happens if I receive a negative RDT test result at the airport?

If your RDT test result is negative, you are free to leave the airport but should isolate at home until you receive your PCR test result. Avoid family and social gatherings and do not go out in public. You will receive your PCR test result by text message, phone call, email or visit from a COVID-19 response worker within 24-72 hours.

30. What happens if my airport PCR test result is positive/negative?

If your PCR test result is positive, you will be visited by a healthcare worker who will give further guidance and instruction. You will have to home isolate or quarantine, and may need to go to a treatment centre if you are experiencing symptoms or are a high-risk patient – a healthcare worker will discuss the best options with you.

31. What should I do if I don't receive my airport PCR test result in 72 hours?

If more than 72 hours have passed and you have not received your result, call 117 quoting your name, date of arrival, airline, reference number or travel ID number, and local phone number that you can be contacted on.

32. What will happen if I fail to comply with COVID-19 arrival protocols?

If you do not have a unique I.D. number from the travel portal and a valid COVID-19 test certificate you will not be allowed to enter the country. If you fail to report any time spent in countries considered by NaCOVERC to be high-risk in the past 14 days, or to comply fully with quarantine or self-quarantine protocols, punitive action will be taken.

ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS FOR INBOUND PASSENGERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN A HIGH-RISK COUNTRY

33. I am fully vaccinated, do I still need to quarantine?

If you have been fully vaccinated and arrive in the country at least 14 days after the last dose of any COVID-19 vaccine, you will only be required to quarantine until your airport PCR test result is available. If it is negative, you will be free to go, if it is positive, you will be required to continue to quarantine for the full period (a minimum of 8 days - see Question 39). If you are travelling with your children and they are under 5 years old, they will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days.

34. What are the NaCOVERC-approved hotels for quarantine, and how can I make a booking?

The NaCOVERC-approved hotels are listed below. You can make a booking by contacting them directly or having someone contact them on your behalf, or by booking online via Visit Sierra Leone (VSL) tour operator - <https://www.visitsierraleone.org/>.

Hotel Name	Address	Phone Number / Email Address	Website
Seaside Suites & Hotel	3A Off Bintumani Drive, Freetown	+23231200300 info@seasidehotelsl.com	http://www.seasidehotelsl.com/
Hill Valley Hotel	34 Signal Hill Rd, Wilberforce, Freetown	+23279005454	
Hotel Mariam	5A Off Beach Road, Aberdeen, Freetown	+23276629156	
Bintumani Hotel	11 Man 'O' War Bay, Aberdeen, Freetown	+23276742407	http://www.bintumanihotelfreetown.online/

Kings Empire Africa	Peninsular Highway, Freetown	+23277714455	
Radisson Blu Mammy Yoko Hotel	17 Lumley Beach Rd, Freetown	+23279253037 info.freetown@radissonblu.com	https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/hotels/radisson-blu-freetown

35. I have been informed that I have to self-quarantine, where can I do this?

If you have been informed that you have to self-quarantine, you can select your own suitable location. A suitable location is one where you will have your own bedroom, your own bathroom, and the facilities you need to be able to prepare your food and wash your clothes for the quarantine period without having to have contact with others or to leave the premises.

36. How do I travel from Lungi International Airport to my pre-booked/arranged NaCOVERC-approved hotel/self-quarantine location?

A plain-clothed security staff and a psychosocial support staff will accompany you (and any others you are travelling with) from the airport to your NaCOVERC-approved hotel or self-quarantine location, as necessary.

37. What are the rules during mandatory quarantine?

During mandatory quarantine you must stay in your own room/bathroom. If you do have to come close to others (for example, hotel staff or others bringing food, cleaners, or swabbers) you must stay at least 2 metres from them and both you and they should wear a mask properly at all times.

Security personnel will stay at the NaCOVERC-approved hotel for the duration of your quarantine to monitor compliance. Psychosocial support staff will conduct welfare checks by visiting or calling regularly.

38. What do I do if I become sick during mandatory quarantine?

Call 117 or call the psychosocial support staff linked to you.

39. When will I be allowed to leave mandatory quarantine?

On day 7 of mandatory quarantine a swab team will visit you at your NaCOVERC-approved hotel or self-quarantine location to perform a diagnostic test (RT-PCR) to screen for active COVID-19 infection. It is done by taking a nasal swab, and it is free. The swab will be sent to the reference laboratory and analysed. Test results will be ready approximately 24-48 hours from the time when the swab was taken. If your test result is negative you will be allowed to leave mandatory quarantine, if it is positive you will have to continue to quarantine where you are, or in a treatment centre if you are experiencing symptoms or are a high-risk patient – a healthcare worker will discuss the best options with you.

40. I was tested on day 7 of mandatory quarantine but did not receive my result, what do I do?

If more than 48 hours have passed and you have not received your result, call 117 to enquire.

FURTHER INFORMATION

41. Where can I get more information?

For more information:

- Call 117 free from all networks;
- Visit the following social media pages:
 - o *Corona Fet Na We All Fet* facebook page
 - o <https://mic.gov.sl/> website
 - o <https://dhse.gov.sl/> website
- Read the other FAQs in this series:
 - o FAQs – COVID-19 Preventive Measures & Testing Services in Sierra Leone
 - o FAQs – COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-Out in Sierra Leone