# Methodology for Monitoring Global Mobility Restrictions and Exceptions to Mobility Restrictions

## IOM COVID-19 Mobility Tracking Database

## Phase 5

## April 2022

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| **Description and Objective** | The IOM COVID-19 Mobility Tracking Database captures various air travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on the changes to pre-existing immigration and border management measures affecting migrants and travellers travelling on specific routes or with specific travel documentation. More specifically, the database and ensuing analysis of collected data highlights emerging changes to post COVID-19 mobility restrictions and requirements. This analysis does not aim to provide exact information on travel requirements. For specific and updated travel information, kindly refer to respective consular authorities of the destination country. International Air Transport Association (IATA) and relevant airline companies may be a valid alternative to explore.<br><br>The current outbreak of COVID-19 has affected global mobility in various ways. To better understand the restrictive measures implemented as a result, IOM has developed a COVID-19 global mobility database to monitor the different types of restrictions and provide a global overview of how they evolved over time. As the situation continues to evolve, the database and ensuing data analysis have been updated and modified to explain and capture the changes in the applied measures. As a result, IOM has designed and entered the fifth phase of methodology for data collection and analysis. The changes and modifications to the database are done while maintaining the baseline categories to allow comparability over time.<br><br>The IOM COVID-19 Mobility Database provides valuable information to the civil society, including media, and the general population to disseminate up-to-date information about COVID-19 related mobility restrictions, exceptions to restrictions and conditions for authorized entry. Regular updates on the global changes in mobility restrictions are also intended to support IOM missions, partners and member states in targeted response planning and advocacy for vulnerable populations who may be affected by changes in global mobility. |
| **Phase 1**<br><br>**(March to April 2020)** | From 10 March 2020 onwards, as COVID-19 travel restrictions began to be imposed by countries, territories or areas (C/T/As), IOM started tracking the various travel restrictions based on information from IATA Timatic service to understand the new, unprecedented and differing impacts of COVID-19 on human mobility. The analysis sought to understand the scope and different types of restrictive measures issued by governments and authorities to limit or halt mobility. In this period, multiple and different restrictive measures such as visa invalidations and partial travel bans were commonly applied to restrict mobility. |
| **Phase 2**<br><br>**(April to October 2020)** | After borders started to close and air traffic was suspended, some groups and individuals were exempt from the restrictions and were still able to travel, despite the continued rise of COVID-19 cases and general travel restrictions. Such exceptions to the travel restrictions were increasingly issued by governments and authorities to facilitate the essential movement of certain groups, return flights of nationals, humanitarian travel and medical aid. Resultantly, from 1st April 2020 onwards, IOM began tracking exceptions to mobility restrictions in addition to the restrictions tracked in Phase 1. This data has been incorporated to highlight the complexity of global mobility restrictions and provide a more nuanced analysis of the changing global mobility context. |

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| **Phase 3**<br><br>**(October 2020 to November 2021)** | While total restrictions on international travel remain valid in some places, the trend towards facilitating mobility continues to expand. However, this mobility is becoming progressively conditional upon and regulated by stringent measures. 'Medical measures', initially implemented as barriers to mobility, are now being used to facilitate mobility. Previously tracked and categorized under forms of restrictions in Phase 1, 'medical measures' in Phases 1 and 2 have in fact become 'conditions for authorized entry' in Phase 3. This shift from medical restrictions to medical measures as enablers of mobility appears increasingly more common. As a result, in Phase 3, medical measures previously categorised as 'Restrictions' in Phase 1 and 2, have been moved and re-categorised as conditions for authorized mobility. To reiterate, in this new phase, 'Travel Restrictions' will only cover total restrictions, such as passenger bans, visa suspensions, and suspensions of flights. This permits a distinction to be made between measures which restrict travel versus measures which, compared to current restrictions, enable travel. It facilitates a better analysis of situations where previous restrictions have been lifted, conditions for permitted entry such as quarantine and COVID-19 medical certificates were observed as emerging new trends.<br><br>Lastly, in Phase 3, a few modifications have also been made to improve and broaden a few data categories to better reflect the changes in the COVID-19-related mobility context. This includes new categories such as 'no restrictions', an expanded list of category groups and an expanded list of medical measures. |
| **Phase 4**<br><br>**(November 2021 to March 2022)** | The emergence of new variants, shifting COVID-19 "epicentres" alongside simultaneous vaccination programmes in some parts of the world continue to affect global mobility through reissuances or extensions of passenger bans, lifting and/or issuance of travel restrictions. Growing discussions around vaccine passports, traffic light systems and new observable trends, such as exceptions for passengers with COVID-19 vaccine or recovery certificates have an impact on the next phase of tracking travel restrictions monitoring and global mobility.<br><br>Notwithstanding the impact of vaccine equity on global mobility, this Phase 4 encapsulates the monitoring of new health related exceptions and conditions for authorized entry. A growing number of exceptions to conditions for authorized entry are calibrated and issued by route. Similarly, new conditions for authorized entry are also being issued in replacement of passenger bans. Resultantly, there is an emerging need to capture this trend.<br><br>A growing number of exceptions to conditions for authorized entry are calibrated and issued by route. Similarly, new conditions for authorized entry are also being issued in replacement of passenger bans. Resultantly, there is an emerging need to capture this trend.<br><br>Finally, Phase 4 also includes a methodological note on identified COVID-19 Hotspots. |

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| **Phase 5** | While the onset of the Omicron variant initially spiked more restrictive travel measures among countries, there was a general move on behalf of governments to lift travel restrictions even as the highest peak of cases worldwide was occurring from January to February 2022. Despite the high infection rates, governments and authorities tended toward lifting travel bans and testing vaccination requirements. In some cases, countries began removing all COVID-19 related entry restrictions and conditions.<br><br>With the aim of reflecting the gradual lifting of entry restrictions and conditions, as well as tracking trends in their removal, Phase 5 of data collection has shifted the focus to the number of Countries, Territories and Areas (C/T/As) issuing or removing entry restrictions (passenger bans, air traffic suspensions) and entry conditions (i.e. medical measures, quarantine, COVID-19 vaccination certificates). |
| **Data Source** | Across all phases, IOM's data sources are consistent. The IOM COVID-19 Mobility Tracking Database is updated using qualitative data from the IATA Timatic website as the primary source of information reported per country, territory or area; WHO's daily situation reports, providing regular updates on context developments from national, regional and international perspectives; direct reporting from IOM staff in field missions; internal IOM database and relevant government and trusted media sources.<br><br>**PHASE 1**<br><br>For **mobility restrictions** data is collected on:<br>  i.  Date of restriction<br>  ii.  Country, territory or area issuing restrictions<br>  iii.  Country, territory or area on which restrictions were imposed<br>  iv.  Type of mobility restriction (i.e., a passenger entry ban and or visa restriction)<br>**PHASE 2**<br><br>For **exceptions to mobility restrictions** data is collected on:<br>  i.  Date of exception<br>  ii.  Country, territory or area issuing exceptions<br>  iii.  Country, territory or area to which exceptions apply<br>  iv.  Type of restriction on which the specific exception is issued<br>  v.  Type of exceptions – this refers to specific categories of groups or individuals that are exempted from mobility restrictions<br>**PHASE 3**<br><br>For **conditions for authorized entry** data is collected on:<br>  i.  Date of different types of conditions for authorized entry<br>  ii.  Country, territory or area issuing new conditions for authorized entry<br>  iii.  Country, territory or area, or category to which the condition applies*<br>  iv.  Type of exception for which the specific condition is issued (when applicable)<br>  v.  Type of conditions for authorized entry, such as Quarantine, Health Declaration Forms, Location and Contact Tracing Apps, and other emerging measures etc. |

**PHASE 4**

In phase 4, a total of six new exceptions group will be added:

Phase 4 New Exceptions Groups:

1. COVID-19 Vaccine certificates refers to evidence (certificate/QR code, etc.,) suggesting that an individual may have had one, two, three/booster doses of the WHO approved COVID-19 vaccines administered in a specific CTA between a period of 7 to 14 days prior to travel
2. COVID-19 Negative Test Prior to or Upon Arrival: refers to individuals who have a negative COVID-19 test result prior to or upon arrival.
3. COVID-19 Recovery Certificates: refers to individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 to 180 days period.
4. Children accompanying adult with a COVID-19 Vaccine Certificate: refers to children under the age of 18 whose legal guardian/parent possesses to evidence suggesting that an individual may have had one or two doses of the WHO approved COVID-19 vaccines in a period of 14 days prior to travel
5. Nationals/residents of specific CTAs with COVID-19 Vaccine certificate

In terms of new conditions for authorized entry, one new condition will be added:

1. COVID-19 vaccination certificate showing that they were fully vaccinated at least 14 days before arrival.

**PHASE 5**

Phase 5 Regrouping

With the aim to synthesize and simplify the analysis, the following regroupings of categories have been completed across the three broad categorisations for entry restrictions and conditions for authorized entry, as well as for the exceptions recorded for each restriction or condition entry requirement.

**Entry Restrictions on Passengers**
  i. Passengers or nationals arriving from or having been to the CTA are not allowed to enter: now includes all passenger bans that were previously divided into different categories by time, i.e. passengers not allowed to enter who have been in certain C/T/As in the last 10 days, or 14 days.
  ii. Air traffic suspensions: includes the entry restrictions of flight suspensions and airport closures.

**Conditions for authorized entry**
  i. Medical Measures and certificates: includes several quarantine, medical testing or certificates required for authorized entry. They are:
      a. Quarantine prior or after entering the country
      b. Health Screening upon arrival (COVID-19 test)
      c. COVID-19 recovery certificate/negative test/vaccination certificate required

  ii. Document change: encompasses entry documentation related to the suspension of issuance of new visas and/or permits to all foreigners or some nationalities that were previously divided into several categories

including the request of COVID-19 test or health certificate for visa application and other changes in visa requirements.

iii. <u>Passenger Tracking System:</u> includes the previously separate categories of Health Declaration Form/Travel History Form, Health Surveillance (app/informing local authorities) and the Passenger Location Form.

iv. <u>Other Type of Limitation but not total restriction:</u> includes any other restriction or condition not covered above.

v. <u>No measures:</u> This category applies to C/T/As that have removed all COVID-19 related travel measures.

**Exceptions:** The new exception categories have been grouped into broader categories to focus on the exception categories most consistently issued by C/T/As. They include:

i. <u>Emergency assistance:</u> International Protection (e.g. refugees), medical treatment and humanitarian flights.
ii. <u>Children:</u> Children below a certain age and children accompanying adult with a COVID-19 vaccine certificate
iii. <u>COVID health document:</u> COVID-19 negative test prior or upon arrival/vaccines/recovery certificates/medically exempt
iv. <u>Nationals or Residents (including family members)</u>
v. <u>Nationals and residents of another CTA</u>
**vi.** <u>Other:</u> Passengers with a special approval/valid letter of prior approval issued by the government or other entity. Previously this included persons in need, medical evacuation flights, emergency flights or refuelling flights. The types of exceptions categorised under 'others' allows us to identify new emerging trends through systematic recording, which can lead to the creation of new categories. For example, in phase 4, 'Others' included individuals, children with vaccinated passengers/guardians which is now categorised in phase 5.
vii. <u>Students:</u> Exceptions for Students
viii. <u>Transit:</u> Passengers in transit
ix. <u>Work related travel:</u> Technical, directive personnel and cargo operators/Healthcare workers/Cross-border works/airline crew/traveling on business/seamen/military
x. <u>Passengers with diplomatic/UN passports:</u> Passengers with a diplomatic and or UN passport; personnel of international and humanitarian organizations

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| **Key Definitions** | **Restrictions on International Air Travel Restriction due to COVID-19:**<br>International air travel restrictions issued by the authorities of any country, territory or area (CTA) in response to COVID-19.<br><br>**Entry restrictions:**<br>International air travel restrictions which do not allow the entry of passengers of a given country, territory or area (CTA). This could include a complete airport closure, nationality ban, suspension of flights. |

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| | **Conditions for Authorized Entry:**<br>These are partial restrictions in the form of specific requirements upon which entry is dependent. These conditions include medical measures and certificates, new requirements on visa/travel documents or different types of passenger tracking systems. Conditions for entry may be applicable to all passengers or certain groups such as specific nationalities, individuals arriving from a group of C/T/As, etc.).<br><br>**Exception Groups:**<br>Refers to specific population groups (e.g., children, diplomatic passport holders, nationals, residents, persons that travelled from or transited through a specific country) and/or individuals to whom the specific COVID-19 related travel restriction issued by a CTA are not applicable to.<br><br>**No Measures:**<br>Refers to the removal of COVID-19 related international air travel restrictions issued after 10th March 2020.<br><br>**No Restriction Reported:**<br>When a CTA has not officially reported restrictions upon any CTA. Note that this does not mean that restrictions do not exist but only those restrictions were not officially reported. |
| **Aggregation** | The different types of **entry restrictions** are aggregated and coded to facilitate a more concise analysis of how many C/T/As have issued entry restrictions. Entry restrictions are categorised into two major groupings.<br>1. **Entry restrictions on Passengers (RC):** This includes any ban on passengers based on nationality or bans on passengers arriving from or transiting though selected C/T/As.<br>2. **Air Traffic Suspensions (TS):** This category includes airport closures or C/T/As that have suspended all flights.<br><br>The second category of measures directed to restrict international air travel are **conditions for authorized entry**. These are aggregated and coded to facilitate a more concise analysis of how many C/T/As have issued one or more conditions for authorized entry. These conditions are categorised into three major groupings.<br>1. **Medical measures and certificates:** This includes any ban on passengers based on nationality, or bans on passengers arriving from or transiting though selected C/T/As.<br>2. **Document change:** This includes suspensions to issuance of entry documentation such as visas and/or entry permits, as well as any changes in visa requirements that may be issued for nationals/all passengers arriving from specific C/T/As.<br>3. **Medical Measures and certificates:** This includes mandatory quarantine prior or after entering the country, health screening upon arrival, negative COVID-19 test certificate, a COVID-19 vaccination certificate or recovery certificate.<br>4. **Other type of limitation:** Any other measure that is not specifically medically related (use 25 for medically related measures).<br>5. **Passenger tracking system:** This includes either health declaration/travel history forms, health surveillance forms or passenger locator forms for all passengers entering a C/T/As. |

The conditions for authorized entry issued by C/T/As often include exceptions for certain groups. These different types of **exceptions** are aggregated and coded to facilitate a more concise analysis of the type of restrictions that have associated exceptions. For this, the various exceptions are categorised into 11 types:

1. **COVID health document:** This exception is for passengers who have either a COVID-19 negative test certificate, a COVID-19 vaccination or recovery certificate, or who have a medical certificate issued by a doctor certifying that they are exempt from COVID-19 testing and vaccines.
2. **Children:** This exception applies to passengers below a certain age.
3. **Students:** This exception applies to education-related travel for passengers with student status.
4. **No exceptions:** This applies when C/T/As have not made any exceptions to their entry restrictions or conditions for authorized entry.
5. **Passengers with diplomatic passports:** This includes passengers with aUN passport, personnel from international and humanitarian organizations, passengers with a diplomatic passport/visa, diplomats on duty station in the country (including family members).
6. **Emergency Assistance:** This category includes exceptions for persons in the realm of international protection (i.e. persons with refugee status), and persons requiring urgent medical treatment. It also includes exceptions for flights (i.e. humanitarian flights, flights in emergency, repatriation flights).
7. **Nationals and Residents (including family members):** These exceptions are valid for nationals or residents of the C/T/A issuing entry restrictions or conditions and includes family members.
8. **Exceptions for Nationals and Residents of another C/T/A:** This exception includes nationals and residents of another or select other C/T/As for which entry restrictions and conditions do not apply.
9. **Others** is an open category which is subject to change. Previously this included persons in need, medical evacuation flights, emergency flights or refuelling flights. The types of exceptions categorised under 'others' allows us to identify new emerging trends through systematic recording, which can lead to the creation of new categories. For example, in phase 4, 'Others' included individuals, children with vaccinated passengers/guardians which is now categorised in phase 5.
10. **Transit:** This exception applies to transiting passengers in a given time frame.
11. **Work-related Travel:** This exception applies to passengers on work-related travel. This includes: technical directive personnel and cargo operators, healthcare professionals, healthcare researchers and collaborators, Cross-border workers, Individuals travelling for business purposes, airline crew, seamen, military personnel/military forces of NATO.

**No Measures:** Refers to the removal of COVID-19 related travel restrictions that was issued since or after 10th March 2020.

| Data Analysis | The aim of the data analysis is to understand the evolving and diverse impacts of COVID-19 on global mobility and to help identify and develop appropriate response. The data analysis seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the trends, detailing how global and regional trends in air travel measures have evolved since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March 2020. |
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| | The global analysis is based on the C/T/A imposing the entry restrictions and/or conditions for entry along with the C/T/A upon which these restrictions and conditions are being imposed, looking specifically at the aggregation of the types of restrictive travel measures.<br><br>Furthermore, the global analysis on the exceptions is based on the C/T/A issuing an exception, the associated mobility restriction type and the category group for which the exception is issued.<br><br>The global analysis on the conditions for authorised entry is based on the C/T/A issuing conditions for entry for either all passengers or for select groups of passengers. |
| **Limitations** | The data is dependent on entry restrictions and conditions for authorized entry on international air travel, as well as the associated exceptions to mobility restrictions. which could be time sensitive. The data categorisations were defined in collaboration with IOM technical experts to align with operational needs. As a result, the categories used may not reflect the full scope of the multiple and simultaneous restrictive measures imposed by a specific C/T/A. Data accuracy is ensured through regular assessments and triangulation of information where feasible and possible.<br><br>The data does not reflect sub-national restrictive measures from a specific part of the C/T/As, and it does not reflect restrictive measures imposed by C/T/As on their own nationals. Additionally, secondary measure which 'could' apply are not coded. |

The categories for Phase 5 of data collection have been merged into the following structure:

**ENTRY RESTRICTIONS**

| # | Restriction Type | Restriction Type | Code |
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| 1 | Travellers arriving from or having been to the country, territory or area are not allowed to enter, without time parameter | Entry Restriction | RC |
| 1 | Travellers arriving from or having been to the country, territory or area in the last 14 days are not allowed to enter | Entry Restriction | RC |
| 1 | Travellers arriving from or having been to the country, territory or area in any period more than 14 days are not allowed to enter | Entry Restriction | RC |
| 1 | Nationals from these countries not allowed to enter, without time parameter | Entry Restriction | RC |
| 7 | All flights are suspended | Entry Restriction | TS |
| 7 | All (international) airports are closed | Entry Restriction | TS |

**CONDITIONS FOR AUTHORIZED ENTRY**

| # | Restriction Type | Restriction Type | Code |
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| 10 | Request of COVID-19 test or health certificate for visa application | Document Change | TD |
| 10 | Suspension of issuance of new visa and/or permit to all foreigners or some nationalities | Document Change | TD |
| 10 | Change in visa requirements, nationals from country now require visa | Document Change | TD |
| 10 | Change in visa requirements, visiting foreigners previously in these countries now require visa | Document Change | TD |
| 10 | Change in visa requirements, all passengers arriving from these countries now require visa | Document Change | TD |
| 10 | Change in visa requirements, nationals from country, territory or area have previously issued visas invalidated | Document Change | TD |
| 10 | Change in movement agreement, ID card no longer enough, passport now required | Document Change | TD |
| 20 | Medical measures, quarantine prior or after entering the country | Medical Measures | MR |
| 20 | Quarantine of 14 days in country with no confirmed cases required and medical certificate required | Medical Measures | MR |
| 21 | Health Screening upon arrival (blood sample, temperature checks, swab, thermal screening) | Medical Measures | MR |
| 22 | Medical measures, medical certificate required | Medical Measures | MR |
| 22 | COVID-19 vaccination certificate showing fully vaccination | Medical Measures | MR |
| 30 | Medical measures, other type of medical restrictions and measures (not different from 21) | Other Limitation | OL |
| 30 | Other type of limitations but not total restriction | Other Limitation | OL |

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| 40 | Health Declaration Form /Travel History Form | Passenger tracking system/tool | PT |
| 40 | Health Surveillance (app/informing local authorities) | Passenger tracking system/tool | PT |
| 40 | Passenger Location form | Passenger tracking system/tool | PT |
| 99 | Removed all restrictions and conditions | No Measures | NR |

**EXCEPTIONS**

| EX code | Restriction Type | Restriction Type |
|---|---|---|
| EX_CER | Passengers with COVID-19 negative test prior or upon arrival | COVID health document |
| EX_CER | Passengers with a letter issued by a doctor proving that the passenger is medically unable to receive the vaccine | COVID health document |
| EX_CER | Passengers with COVID-19 recovery certificates | COVID health document |
| EX_CER | Passengers with COVID-19 vaccine certificates | COVID health document |
| EX_CHI | Children accompanying adult with a COVID-19 vaccine certificate | Children |
| EX_CHI | Children below a certain age | Children |
| EX_EGC | Passengers with a UN passport; personnel of international and humanitarian organizations | Passengers with diplomatic/UN passports |
| EX_EGC | Passengers with a diplomatic passport/visa; diplomats on duty station in the country (including family members) | Passengers with diplomatic/UN passports |
| EX_NAR | Exceptions for International Protection (e.g. Refugees, etc.) | Emergency assistance |
| EX_NAR | Persons requiring urgent medical treatment | Emergency assistance |
| EX_NAR | Exceptions for flights (e.g. humanitarian flights, flights in emergency, repatriation flights) | Emergency assistance |

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| EX_NOC | Exceptions for Nationals/Residents of another CTA | Nationals and residents of another CTA |
| EX_NOE | No exceptions | No exceptions |
| EX_OTH | Passengers with a special approval/valid letter of prior approval issued by the government or other entity | Other |
| EX_OTH | Others | Others |
| EX_STU | Exceptions for Students | Students |
| EX_TRA | Passengers in transit | Transit |
| EX_WOR | Technical, directive personnel and cargo operators | Work related travel |
| EX_WOR | Healthcare professionals, healthcare researchers and collaborators | Work related travel |
| EX_WOR | Cross-border workers | Work related travel |
| EX_WOR | Individuals travelling for business purposes | Work related travel |
| EX_WOR | Airline crew | Work related travel |
| EX_WOR | Seamen | Work related travel |
| EX_WOR | Military personnel/Military forces of NATO | Work related travel |