

Update on COVID-19 Developments in Qatar

October 15, 2021

In May 2021, Qatar implemented the first phase of its national COVID-19 response plan for the gradual lifting of the COVID-19 restrictions. On October 3, 2021, Qatar entered into the fourth and final phase of the plan, as the number of COVID-19 infections in Qatar continues to decline and more than 80% of Qatari residents are fully vaccinated. In September, Qatar's Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) began administering vaccination booster shots for high-risk individuals.

In phase four, schools and workplaces may operate at 100% capacity, subject to certain restrictions. Face masks continue to be required in all closed places but no longer must be worn in open public places, except for organized public events and the premises of schools, mosques and universities. Every individual in Qatar (including visitors) must use the EHTERAZ app when leaving the house. The app identifies each individual's vaccination status and assists in the tracking of disease transmission chains. A summary of the most important travel and workplace policies follows.

Travel to Qatar

Qatar has classified countries into a green and a red category and distinguishes between citizens and residents of Qatar (Group A) and visitors (Group B).

- Vaccinated passengers traveling from a green listed country:
 - Both groups are exempted from quarantine.
 - Group A passengers must undergo PCR testing within 36 hours of arriving in Qatar.
 - Group B passengers must get a PCR test within 72 hours before arriving in Qatar.
- Unvaccinated passengers traveling from a green listed country:
 - Group A passengers are required to undergo home quarantine for 7 days.
 - Group B passengers are required to undergo hotel quarantine for 7 days (except visa category B). First-degree relatives may undergo home quarantine for 7 days instead.
 - Both Groups must take a PCR test 72 hours before arrival in Qatar and on the sixth day of quarantine.
- Vaccinated passengers traveling from a red listed country:
 - Group A passengers will be exempted from quarantine.
 - Group B passengers must undergo a 2-day hotel quarantine. First-degree relatives may undergo a 2-day home quarantine instead.
 - Both groups must undergo a PCR test 72 hours before arrival in Qatar. Group A must take a PCR test within 36 hours of arriving in Qatar. Group B must undergo PCR testing upon arrival at the quarantine hotel.
- Unvaccinated passengers traveling from a red listed country:
 - The rules are the same as for unvaccinated passengers traveling from a green listed country, except that no exception exists for visa category B.

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Business

Companies are permitted to have their workforce return at full capacity. Employees in the workplace must wear masks at all times and maintain a minimum distance of one meter to other individuals. Unvaccinated employees must regularly undergo testing, as per MOPH guidance. Companies are required to implement signage and floor markers, reminding employees of the distance requirements. In-person meetings are limited to 30 persons and should only take place if absolutely necessary. Face-to-face meetings are subject to the one-meter distance requirement, and attendants are required to wear face masks at all times.

It is crucial that companies operating in Qatar remain updated on their compliance obligations. In phase four, companies are required to adopt a COVID-19 response plan addressing how to ensure the health and safety of their employees upon return to the workplace. Further, Qatari companies are required to appoint a compliance officer who ensures implementation and monitoring of all COVID-19 restrictions.

Please contact the authors or your Miller Canfield attorney to discuss these developments further.

This information is based on the facts and guidance available at the time of publication and may change.