

CCDPH Travel Quarantine Guidance

September 16, 2020

Changes or additions are highlighted in gray.

Basics

What states are included in the guidance?

Please see this [page](#) for a list of states. The guidance applies to states that have greater than 15 new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents per day, over a 7-day rolling average.

How often the is list of states updated?

The list of states will be updated every Tuesday. The list of states will be effective that Friday. States are removed from the list when they have 2 consecutive weeks in a row when their daily case average is below 15 daily cases per 100,000 residents.

Will xx state be added to travel guidance list?

There are many factors that impact the COVID-19 case rate. It is difficult to predict if any state will be added to the travel guidance list.

When does the guidance start?

The guidance goes into effect immediately.

How long does the guidance last?

The guidance will be in effect until further notice. Any changes will be based on public health guidance.

Where does the guidance apply?

The guidance applies to suburban Cook County, excluding the City of Evanston and the Village of Skokie.

What if I'm not sick?

The quarantine guidance applies to people even if they have no symptoms of COVID-19 and those who test negative for COVID-19.

Can I go to work?

All travelers returning to suburban Cook County from the designated states should self-quarantine for 14 days, except for essential workers traveling for work purposes. For more information on essential workers, please see the Exceptions section below.

What if I have a doctor's note saying that I don't need to follow the travel guidance?

A doctor's note is not sufficient to disregard the travel quarantine guidance.

Will the guidance be enforced?

No, unlike the City of Chicago, suburban Cook County's travel guidance is our recommendation, and not an order. The health department will not be issuing fines or enforcing the guidance.

Why isn't CCDPH enforcing the travel guidance?

CCDPH does not have the resources to enforce the travel guidance. We are working with state and local partners to elevate concerns, especially with large gatherings of travelers from the states with increases.

Travel Situations

What if I'm staying in suburban Cook County for less than 14 days?

The guidance only applies 14 days or for the time that someone is in suburban Cook County, whichever is shorter. If someone is staying in suburban Cook County for 3 days, for example, then they are only required to quarantine for 3 days.

What if I changed planes in a state on the list, but didn't stay there?

The guidance does not apply to any individual passing through designated states for a limited duration (less than 24 hours) through the course of travel, such as travelers changing planes at airports in or driving through designated states.

What if I traveled to the state, but then traveled to another state not on the list before returning to suburban Cook County?

If you spent longer than 24 hours in a designated state, you should quarantine for 14 days from the time of last contact within the designated state, even if you spent time in a non-designated state for a period after being in the designated state and before arriving in suburban Cook County.

What if I landed in a Cook County airport, but I'm not staying in suburban Cook County?

The guidance does not apply to individuals changing planes at O'hare, Midway, or other airports and then traveling directly to a place outside of suburban Cook County.

What if my friend or family member traveled from a state on the list and is staying with me, do I also need to quarantine?

No. Traveling individuals are encouraged to self-quarantine in the home they are traveling to in suburban Cook County and should avoid close interactions with non-traveling household members until the 14 days have passed. Other household members who did not travel from a designated state are not required to self-quarantine.

What if I already bought my ticket?

To help stop the spread of COVID-19, all travelers arriving from designated states should follow the quarantine guidance, with some limited exceptions. For residents of the City of Chicago, travel restrictions took effect July 6, 2020. For more information about the City of Chicago travel order, please visit this [link](#).

Quarantine

What's a quarantine?

Quarantine means staying at a single designated home or dwelling for 14 days before doing any activities outside of the home or dwelling. People in quarantine should separate themselves from others as much as possible and check themselves for symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. For a full list of symptoms, please visit this [link from the CDC](#).

What if I'm not sick?

The quarantine guidance applies to people even if they have no symptoms COVID-19 and those who test negative for COVID-19.

Can CCDPH issue a letter saying that I'm release from the quarantine?

CCDPH cannot issue a letter to release someone from quarantine. If an organization requires a note, please contact your primary care provider.

Exceptions

What are the exceptions to the guidance?

The following groups of people are exempted from the guidance:

- **Essential workers that are Cook County residents**, who traveled to designated states for work purposes. Essential Workers must have documentation from their employer.
- **Essential workers that are not Cook County residents** traveling from a designated state to Cook County for the primary purpose of carrying out their primary work in Cook County, and who need to be physically present in Cook County in order to carry out that primary work. Essential Workers should have documentation from their employer.
- **People who stayed for less than 24 hours** in the states with a surge in cases (for example, who changed planes or drove through the state.)
- **Travel for medical care and parental shared custody.**

What's considered an essential worker?

An essential worker is a person who works in critical infrastructure as designated by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency in this [list](#).

Essential workers include any state, local, and federal officials and employees traveling in their official capacities on government business, including military service. Essential workers should have documentation from their employer.

What guidelines should Essential Workers follow?

Essential workers traveling for work purposes are subject to the following requirements:

- Essential workers should avoid any non-essential interactions until the quarantine period has ended. They must limit their activities to work-related activities and functions that directly support their work-related activities, and avoid public spaces as much as possible.
- Essential workers should monitor temperature and [signs of symptoms](#), [wear a face covering](#) when in public, [maintain physical distance](#), and [clean and disinfect workspaces](#).
- Essential workers are required, to the extent possible, to avoid extended periods in public, contact with strangers, and large congregate settings.

What are recommendations for Healthcare Workers who travel to a high-incidence state for personal reasons?

- Healthcare workers who travel for personal reasons are recommended to quarantine for 14 days after they return to suburban Cook County.
- A healthcare system can, however, implement a system of monitoring and testing their workers that includes:
 - PCR-based testing performed 5-7 days after return
 - Healthcare workers with a negative test can return to work on day 8, if the following criteria are met:
 - The healthcare worker had NO close prolonged contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case and
 - The healthcare worker has no symptoms of COVID-19 and
 - Universal precautions are in place at work.

If the healthcare worker develops any symptoms of COVID-19, they must stop working immediately and be tested again.

What if I'm not sick?

The quarantine guidance applies to people even if they have no symptoms of COVID-19.

What if I tested negative?

The quarantine guidance applies to people even if they test negative for COVID-19.