



COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA
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**Statement by Hon. Dr. Irving McIntyre, Acting Prime Minister and Minister for
Health, Wellness, and New Health Investment**

March 28, 2022

From March 2020, Dominica has been dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic which has significantly affected our way of life and livelihoods. Over the last two years we have gone through various phases of the pandemic and we have had to respond to periods of surges, new variants, hospitalization, and deaths. Throughout this challenging period, our Government has capably responded and provided quality health care for treatment of COVID-19, increased accessibility to COVID-19 testing, made safe and effective vaccines available to all, and put public health measures and protocols in place for the health and safety of the general public.

Our public education drive, protocols and restrictions, progress in the vaccination of our population, along with a less virulent strain of the virus have significantly lowered our rate of hospitalization and deaths. Additionally, the number of daily new cases has dropped significantly in the last few weeks and the positivity rate (that is the number of positive cases per number of people tested) is trending downwards.

Since the surge of cases in July 2021, Government continually assessed the situation and has gradually relaxed restrictions to help the population transition safely back to normalcy. We successfully hosted pilot vaccinated entertainment events during the

“Building a Resilient Public Service: A Collective Response”



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Carnival Season and students have returned to face-to-face learning using a blended approach. Around the world we have noted the relaxation of restrictions as vaccination rates increase and health care systems are better able to manage the virus at this stage.

It is within this context that Cabinet has approved a revision of COVID-19 protocols and relaxation of restrictions to allow businesses and activities to return to normal operations, while protecting public health and limiting a resurgence of COVID-19 cases.

Cabinet has approved the following changes to the Environmental Health Services (COVID-19) Regulations to take effect from April 4, 2022:

- Restrictions on religious gatherings have been removed. Churches are no longer restricted to a maximum attendance of 150 and may operate at full capacity.
- Public transportation is allowed to operate at full capacity.
- Restrictions on Educational Instruction have been removed. Daycares and Pre-schools will be allowed to re-open in keeping with health protocols developed for these establishments with effect from April 4th. Primary and Secondary Schools will return to full face to face learning for the 3rd Term on April 25th. All other educational institutions will resume normal operations in keeping with their academic schedules.
- All bars are allowed to resume normal operations. Restrictions on music and congregating have been removed.
- Nightclubs are allowed to reopen for under 300 patrons with strict adherence to health protocols



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- Restrictions on social activity, such as private parties and sporting activities, with fewer than 300 in attendance have been removed.
- For special events of above 300 patrons, a special event permit is required. Proof of vaccination *or* negative antigen test result within 24 hours of entry is required and other health protocols will be applied. Sporting events with above 300 patrons will be hosted under the revised Special Event Protocols. Nightclubs hosting events for over 300 patrons must also comply with the Special Event Protocols.
- Physical distancing of six feet is no longer mandatory at businesses and establishments.
- Restrictions on visitation to the prison, hospitals and homes for the aged have been removed. The Public should note that these institutions will formulate internal policies for visitation, in keeping with health protocols and these policies should be strictly adhered to.
- The mask mandate remains in effect and will be reviewed in May. The removal of the mask mandate will depend on an increase in vaccination numbers and further reduction in COVID-19 cases so we are all urged to continue following the protocols.
- All businesses, establishments, churches, schools and forms of public transportation are required to conform to the safety protocols such as sanitizing and the wearing of masks.



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In addition to the relaxation of restrictions imposed under the Environmental Health Services Regulations, changes have been made to travel protocols to further ease travel to Dominica and support the full reopening of the tourism sector.

- For the Cruise Sector, all vaccinated passengers will be allowed to disembark and tour freely in keeping with established cruise ship and port protocols. Cruise sector workers (taxi drivers, vendors, tour guides) must be vaccinated or present a negative, 48-hour Antigen test result and Safe in Nature pass.
- The requirement for pre-arrival testing and testing on arrival for vaccinated travellers at all ports of entry, to include seafarers and yachters, has been removed.
- Pre-arrival testing and testing on arrival will remain in place for unvaccinated travellers at the traveller's cost.
- Unvaccinated travellers who test negative on arrival will no longer be required to quarantine.
- Testing on arrival for symptomatic travellers will remain in effect.
- Travelers who test positive, will be isolated in keeping with local isolation protocols
- Children 12 and under will assume the status of parents or guardian
- Travellers will no longer be required to fill and submit the pre-travel form online.

While we are pleased to announce these changes and look forward to the positive impact on the economy and our livelihoods, I wish to urge the public to remain cautious. This announcement by no way means that COVID-19 is no longer with us. This is now



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the era of personal responsibility and I encourage everyone to continue to adhere to all safety measures to protect against the transmission of COVID-19. Continue to wear your masks, wash and sanitize your hands, follow proper respiratory etiquette, and most importantly get vaccinated to protect your health and help stop the spread of the virus.

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