Group Travel Guidelines During COVID-19

Travel significantly increases the risk of contracting COVID-19, and the amount of increased risk depends on the length of the trip, location, and type of travel as well as the vaccination status of the traveler. This guidance provides information about USC’s restrictions on group (2 or more people) travel for USC-sponsored groups, which aligns with CDC and other relevant requirements (State/local, County and Country). In addition to following these guidelines, group members should also check for additional local advisories, restrictions, and guidance issued by authorities in the trip location.

USC guidelines reflect current guidance from the CDC and CA Department of Public Health regarding vaccination, testing, and quarantine for travelers.

**USC-Sponsored Travel**

**USC Review & Approval**
All USC-sponsored travel requires approval from relevant School Dean or designated division lead.

**CPMC Review**
Additional review and approval by USC COVID-19 Project Management Committee (CPMC) is required for the following scenarios:
- Travel destination includes a CDC Level 4 country
- Overnight trips involving unvaccinated individuals (see Unvaccinated Travelers section below)

**How to Get CPMC Approval**
To obtain approval, send your travel plan (if it’s not in your restart plan) and COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Plan Form to EH&S (see below for additional details). Once reviewed, it will be sent to CPMC and a meeting will be calendared for discussion. Travel that is not USC-sponsored will not require review, but should follow this guidance for safety reasons.

**Risk of COVID-19 While Traveling**

**Overnight Trips**
USC groups who travel and stay for one or more nights are considered at higher risk. All travel must be approved by your school or department and CPMC if appropriate. If you have questions about planning group travel, contact EH&S at ehs@usc.edu for a consultation.

**Day Trips**
USC groups who do not stay overnight are considered lower risk. Day trips do not require approval.

**Before Travel**

**Symptom Check**
All travelers should complete a symptom check on the day of departure through Trojan Check. Travelers experiencing any potential COVID 19 symptoms should not travel regardless of vaccine or testing status.

**Recently Exposed**
Travelers who are recently (within five days prior to departure) exposed, regardless of symptoms, testing, or vaccine status should not travel.

**Fully Vaccinated Travelers**
Verify that all participants are fully vaccinated before departure. Please do this by sending a list of participants to Student Health at least 14
days before departure. Fully vaccinated means two weeks have passed since your final vaccine dose and documentation has been submitted and verified through mySHR (https://usc.edu/myshr).

Unvaccinated Travelers
Unvaccinated individuals are presumptively not permitted for USC sponsored overnight travel; however, an exception may be requested via USC CPMC if travel is absolutely necessary. When possible, unvaccinated students should be given alternative assignments, and/or the ability to delay travel until risks are reduced.

During Travel

Act as a bubble
Groups who choose to travel should act as a “bubble,” setting clear and honest expectations about how to act when inside or outside that bubble. If you or someone in your bubble tests positive, the entire group should be prepared to quarantine or self-isolate. When traveling in a group, the interactions and activities should happen amongst the people you are traveling with. Excursions to public places such as concerts, bars, indoor restaurants, or entertainment venues should be avoided to decrease the amount of exposure to the group.

Room & Board
It is best if rooms can remain single occupancy.

Dining
Meal times are considered higher risk. Meals should be provided outdoors when possible and/or with options for physical distancing.

Planning for USC Group Leaders and Administrators

Quarantine & Isolation Plan
To ensure that you have a plan in place for quarantine and isolation if someone in your bubble becomes symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19 while traveling, complete the COVID-19 Quarantine & Isolation Plan Form. Follow local guidelines for quarantine and isolation unless there is a medical evacuation plan to bring the positive person or unvaccinated exposed person back to Los Angeles. The cost of this will be provided by the group or school sponsoring the trip.

When you return

If you are vaccinated:
• Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms.

If you are unvaccinated:
• Get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel AND stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel.
  o Even if you test negative, stay home and self-quarantine for the full 7 days.
  o If your test is positive, isolate yourself to protect others from getting infected.

Resources

USC Travel (International) Guidance
USC Travel (Personal) Guidelines
USC COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Safety Plan
LADPH Travel Advisory
CDC Domestic Travel During COVID-19
CDC International Travel During COVID-19