

Refugee  
Sponsorship  
Training  
Program



# Travel Resumption Resource Kit for Refugee Sponsors

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## Introduction

This resource kit is for Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs), along with their Constituent Groups (CGs) and co-sponsors, Groups of Five and Community Sponsors that are sponsoring refugees for resettlement to Canada under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program, the Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) program and the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program.\*

The kit:

- Outlines the procedure that IRCC will follow before booking travel for sponsored refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Summarizes the mandatory entry requirements that all persons arriving or entering Canada must follow, including sponsored refugees;
- Provides readiness checklists that sponsors can use to prepare a quarantine plan to ensure the refugees comply with the entry requirements and any instructions provided to them on arrival; and,
- Collates publicly available information and resources on COVID-19 that can assist sponsors and sponsored refugees.

It is strongly recommended that sponsors contact their [provincial or territorial public health agency](#) and their municipal government to see if there are any additional requirements to comply with on arrival in the community of settlement.

For the latest information on the entry requirements for persons arriving or entering Canada, please visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

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\* Throughout this document, the terms “sponsored refugees” and “refugees” are used to refer to the sponsored persons before arrival and the terms “sponsored newcomers” and “newcomers” are used after they have arrived in Canada.

## Before Travel to Canada is Booked

### In-Canada

Before travel to Canada is booked for the sponsored refugees, the Resettlement Operations Centre – Ottawa (ROC-O) will contact the sponsors via email to confirm that they:

1. Have the capacity to welcome the refugees they have applied to sponsor;
2. Have the capacity to provide financial and settlement support to the refugees on arrival and for the entire duration of the sponsorship period;
3. Can facilitate and enable the refugees to comply with the mandatory entry requirements and any instructions provided to them on arrival in Canada; and,
4. Have contacted the refugees to confirm their willingness to travel to Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic and have provided the refugees with their up-to-date contact information (email address and telephone number).

ROC-O will email all the parties to the sponsorship, i.e. those that were listed on and signed the Sponsorship Undertaking form (including CGs and co-sponsors for applications submitted through SAHs).

It is important that all parties to the sponsorship discuss their capacity, readiness and preparedness to welcome the refugees before responding to the email from ROC-O.

Sponsors must respond to the email from ROC-O within the specified deadline. No travel arrangements will be made until ROC-O receives confirmation of the above from the sponsors via email.

If sponsors choose to postpone the arrival of the refugees, or do not respond to the email from ROC-O within the specified deadline, the arrival of the refugees will be placed on hold until further notice. If an arrival is placed on hold, the sponsors will need to contact ROC-O when they are ready and able to welcome the refugees.

Once sponsors have confirmed the above via email, ROC-O will instruct the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to proceed with making the travel arrangements for the refugees.

Sponsors must send their up-to-date contact information (email address and telephone number) to the refugees before they travel to Canada. Sponsors must ensure that this information is current, and the refugees must ensure that it is always accessible to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). Additionally, the sponsors must share their quarantine plan with the refugees before they travel.\*

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\* Sponsors may also want to send a copy of their quarantine plan to the [IRCC funded service provider organization](#) (SPO) at the Port of Entry (POE) when they are requested to provide their contact information to the SPO.

When the travel arrangements have been finalized, a Notification of Arrival Transmission (NAT) will be sent by ROC-O. The NAT will contain the flight information for the sponsored refugees and the updated contact information for the sponsors.

## Overseas

Where possible, the IOM is currently providing sponsored refugees with a pre-departure Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) by telephone and are providing refugees with a printed copy of the COA Participant Workbook.

The COA is currently focused on: the current COVID-19 situation; sharing information about the mandatory entry requirements for all persons arriving or entering Canada (i.e. the mandatory 14-day quarantine or isolation period after arrival); how to prevent the spread of COVID-19; and, addressing any questions or concerns the refugees may have.

IRCC has asked the IOM to provide the refugees with resources produced by the PHAC that is available in multiple languages on the mandatory requirements for persons entering or arriving in Canada [with](#) or [without signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#).

Any documents the refugees require to enter Canada that may have expired will be re-issued by IRCC. IRCC and their partners will also work with each host country to ensure that any other documents that the refugees require, such as exit permits (if applicable), can be renewed or re-issued.

Where possible, the IOM will provide the following to the refugees before they depart:

- Hand sanitizer or wet wipes;
- Pre-departure counseling with a focus on respiratory and hand hygiene;
- An additional health check for symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature check, on the day of departure; and,
- Non-medical facemasks or a face coverings and a provision of masks or coverings for travel.

The IOM will also provide refugees with letters of introduction, which were developed by IRCC in consultation with the CBSA and the PHAC, that can be presented to officers and services providers at the Port of Entry (POE) during the arrival process.

Prior to boarding, the refugees may undergo a limited medical examination with a focus on the [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#) (depending on the requirements of the airline and the host country).

The refugees, along with all air passengers travelling to Canada, are required to [wear a non-medical mask or face covering](#) until they reach the place where they will quarantine in the community of settlement.

## The Requirements on Arrival in Canada

The Government of Canada has implemented emergency orders under the Quarantine Act to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>

The emergency orders detail requirements that must be followed by **all persons** arriving or entering Canada by land, rail, sea or air.

The entry requirements are **mandatory** and **must** be followed by refugees that are sponsored for resettlement to Canada under the PSR, the BVOR, the JAS and the Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) programs.

Violating any of the entry requirements, or any instructions provided on arrival, is [an offence under the Quarantine Act which could lead to a fine or imprisonment](#).

### IMPORTANT:

Sponsors are strongly advised to consult the PHAC website before arrival for the latest and most up-to-date information on the entry requirements: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

### Procedures at the Port of Entry (POE)

On arrival in Canada, officers from the PHAC and the CBSA may ask the sponsored newcomers for information on how they will comply with the entry requirements (e.g. the address at which they will stay at for the 14-day quarantine period).

IRCC has informed the PHAC and the CBSA that sponsors are responsible for making the arrangements that will enable the newcomers to comply with the entry requirements and any instructions provided to them on arrival.

Newcomers can show the standard letter that was provided by the IOM pre-arrival to the PHAC and the CBSA officers.

Sponsors can also use the template created by RSTP in the appendix to this resource kit to create an additional letter that the newcomers can present on arrival which contains more detailed information about the quarantine plan and the arrangements sponsors have made.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the emergency orders introduced under the Quarantine Act please visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/corporate/mandate/about-agency/acts-regulations/list-acts-regulations.html>

Newcomers that are asymptomatic (i.e. do not have any [signs or symptoms of COVID-19](#)) and have a next day connecting flight to their final destination will be required to quarantine in a hotel until their next flight.

Newcomers with a next day connecting flight will be provided with transportation to a hotel, food and assistance during their overnight stay by an [IRCC funded service provider organization](#) (SPO). The newcomers will be required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering while in transit, in public places and on return to the airport. A SPO will make the arrangements when a newcomer needs to stay overnight at the POE before taking a domestic connecting flight to their final destination.

Sponsors are only responsible for ensuring the newcomers comply with the entry requirements and any instructions provided to them on arrival when the newcomers arrive at their final destination in the community of settlement.

### Requirements for Persons without Symptoms of COVID-19\*

Anyone arriving or entering Canada who does not have any [signs or symptoms of COVID-19](#) (i.e. they are asymptomatic) **must** quarantine for a minimum of 14 days immediately on arrival.

This requirement is **mandatory** as persons who are asymptomatic are at risk of developing symptoms and infecting others.

Persons who are asymptomatic must quarantine in a place where:

- They will have access to [food and medication](#); and,
- They will have no contact with [vulnerable people](#), such as adults over the age of 65, people with compromised immune systems or people with pre-existing/underlying medical conditions.

They must also:

- [Wear a non-medical mask or face covering](#) while travelling to the place they will quarantine;
- Go directly to their place of quarantine without stopping anywhere (such as grocery stores, gas stations or other public areas);
- Arrange for someone to pick up [food, medication and any other basic essentials](#) that are required;
- Monitor their health for any [signs or symptoms of COVID-19](#);
- Not have any visitors during the 14-day quarantine period; and,

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\* For the latest and most up-to-date information on the entry requirements for persons without symptoms of COVID-19, please visit: [https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html#\\_Travellers\\_without\\_symptoms](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html#_Travellers_without_symptoms):

- Stay in a private place, such as a yard or balcony, if they go outside for fresh air.

If persons who are asymptomatic on arrival in Canada develop any [signs or symptoms of COVID-19](#) during the mandatory 14-day quarantine period, they must:

- Isolate themselves from others;
- Call a health care professional or a [public health authority](#), explain their symptoms to them and follow their instructions; and,
- Start the 14-day quarantine period again from the date they showed symptoms.

### Requirements for Persons with Symptoms of COVID-19\*

If anyone arriving or entering Canada has any [signs or symptoms of COVID-19](#) (i.e. they are symptomatic) on arrival, they must isolate for 14 days immediately.

Sponsored newcomers that are symptomatic on arrival will either:

- Be taken to a PHAC facility where they can isolate for the 14-day period; or,
- Be taken to a hospital if they require immediate medical care and assistance.

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\* For the latest and most up-to-date information on the entry requirements for persons with symptoms of COVID-19, please visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html#f1>

## Readiness Checklists for Sponsors

The checklists in this section are designed to help sponsors with preparing a quarantine plan to ensure the sponsored refugees comply with the entry requirements and any instructions provided to them on arrival in Canada by a PHAC officer.

These checklists are not exhaustive, and sponsors must consider any individual needs the refugees have when preparing their quarantine plan.

Sponsors must also contact their [provincial or territorial public health agency](#) and their municipal government to see if there are any additional requirements to comply with on arrival in the community of settlement.

## Before Arrival

- Sponsors have confirmed with ROC-O via email that they:
  1. Have the capacity to welcome the refugees they have applied to sponsor;
  2. Have the capacity to provide financial and settlement support to the refugees on arrival and for the entire duration of the sponsorship period;
  3. Can facilitate and enable the refugees to comply with the mandatory entry requirements and any instructions provided on arrival; and,
  4. Have contacted the refugees to confirm their willingness to travel to Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  
- Sponsors have provided the refugees with their up-to-date contact information (email address and telephone number).
  
- Sponsors have explained to the refugees that they will be required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering (provided by the IOM) during their travel to Canada and until they reach the place they will quarantine for the 14-day period in the community of settlement.
  
- Sponsors have shared information with the refugees in their native language on [how to safely use a non-medical mask or face covering](#) and the [importance of doing so](#).
  
- Sponsors have shared information with the refugees in their native language on the [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#).
  
- Sponsors have shared information with the refugees in their native language on [how they can help reduce the spread of COVID-19](#) during their travel to Canada and when they arrive in Canada.
  
- Sponsors have communicated with the refugees about what will happen when they arrive in Canada (i.e. the procedures that will be followed at the POE and what will happen if they have a connecting flight to their final destination with an overnight stay).
  
- Sponsors have identified and secured accommodation where the refugees can [quarantine for the required 14-day period immediately after their arrival in Canada](#).
  
- Sponsors have ensured that the refugees will have no contact with [vulnerable persons](#) at the accommodation where they will quarantine for the required 14-day period.

- Sponsors have shared information with the refugees on where they will be quarantining for the mandatory 14-day period and have provided them with a copy of the letter included in the appendix of this resource kit with the relevant information.
- Sponsors have shared information with the refugees in their native language on the [requirements they must follow when entering Canada if they do not have any signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#) and the [entry requirements if they do have symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- Sponsors have shared information with the refugees on the potential [consequences of breaching the entry requirements](#) and the sponsors are able to answer or address any questions or concerns the refugees may have about the requirements or the quarantine arrangements the sponsors have made.
- Sponsors have made suitable arrangements to meet the refugees on arrival whilst maintaining physical (social) distancing.
- Sponsors arranged for transportation that enables the refugees to travel directly to their place of quarantine without stopping anywhere.

Sponsors that have welcomed refugees during the pandemic have used the following methods to transport the refugees directly from the airport to their place of quarantine:

- Taxis where there is a glass or plastic shield between the driver and the passenger/s; and,
- The use of large vehicles, such as SUVs, minivans or buses, that enable the driver and the passenger/s to maintain a minimum 2-meter distance.

Sponsors should confirm that the driver of the vehicle does not have any [signs or symptoms of COVID-19](#) on the day they are scheduled to meet the refugees at the airport and take them to their place of quarantine.

Sponsors should ensure that everyone, including the driver, wears masks and gloves during the journey and that there is hand sanitizer available for use in the vehicle.

- The place where the refugees will quarantine for the 14-day period is well stocked with [food, medication, cleaning supplies and any other basic essentials](#) for the entire period, taking into account any special dietary or medical needs the refugees may have.\*

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Soap for handwashing;

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\* Note: Sponsors are advised to keep copies of receipts for any food, items and supplies they purchase in the event they are requested to [demonstrate that support was provided](#) to the refugees by IRCC's Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT).

- Disinfectant cleaning supplies;
- Disinfectant wipes (if available);
- Laundry detergent;
- Dish soap;
- General household cleaning products and equipment (such as garbage bags, mops, brooms, dusters etc.);
- [Alcohol based hand sanitizers](#) (containing at least 60% alcohol);
- A thermometer;
- Non-medical masks or face coverings (if the refugees need to leave their place of quarantine in the event of an emergency);
- Fever reducing medications (i.e. acetaminophen or ibuprofen for adults and children);
- Toilet paper, facial tissues and kitchen towels;
- Diapers;
- Baby wipes;
- Baby formula;
- Feminine hygiene products;
- Fresh produce, eggs, dairy (or non-dairy substitutes), meat, fish or seafood (taking into account any dietary preferences and/or dietary restrictions);
- Dried foods, such as pasta, rice, beans, chickpeas and grains;
- Canned foods such as soups, vegetables and beans;
- Any special dietary foods or ethno-cultural foods; and,
- Books, toys and ideas for indoor activities that can be done during the 14-day period.

- Sponsors have planned how they will drop off or deliver (with no contact) food, medication, cleaning supplies and other essentials at the place the refugees will be quarantining for the 14-day period in the event they need additional food, items or supplies.
- Sponsors have planned how they will provide financial and settlement support remotely during the 14-day quarantine period, such as:
  - Contacting local banks to see if it is possible for the refugees to open a bank account online or over the phone so that the sponsors can provide financial support to the refugees remotely via bank transfers or e-transfers in order to minimize the need for in-person interaction;
  - Researching what settlement supports are being provided remotely and online by [settlement agencies and service providing organizations](#) in the community of settlement;
  - How to complete online applications (if available) for the Canada Child Benefit, provincial healthcare coverage and the Social Insurance Number (if not issued on arrival at the POE);
  - Ensuring that the refugees have access to a computer/laptop or smartphone/tablet and an internet or data connection, so they can communicate with sponsors; and,
  - Identifying how sponsors will communicate with the refugees whilst they are quarantining for the 14-day period (e.g. phone calls, video calls via Zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook, Viber, Skype, Google Hangouts or FaceTime) and have researched how they can use the [Google Translate website or app to assist them with communicating](#) via text and over the phone or via video calls in the absence of an interpreter.

## On Arrival

- The newcomers are transported directly to their accommodation where they will quarantine for the 14-day period without stopping anywhere and the newcomers wear masks until they reach their accommodation.
- The newcomers are provided with information by the sponsors in their native language on [COVID-19](#), the [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#) and how they can [help reduce the spread of COVID-19](#).
- Sponsors explain to the newcomers who in the sponsoring group they should contact if they exhibit any [signs or symptoms of COVID-19](#) during the 14-day quarantine period and [what procedure will be followed](#).
- The newcomers are provided with information in their native language on [the best way to wash their hands](#) to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- The newcomers are provided with information in their native language on the [importance of physical \(social\) distancing and how they can practice physical \(social\) distancing](#).
- The newcomers understand the [importance of physical \(social\) distancing](#), [how they can practice physical \(social\) distancing](#) and the [best way to wash their hands](#) to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Sponsors are providing financial support to the newcomers remotely via bank transfers or e-transfers to avoid physical contact during the 14-day quarantine period and until physical (social) distancing practices are no longer in effect.
- Sponsors have provided a computer/laptop or smartphone/tablet to the newcomers (if they do not have one already) and have set up an internet or data connection so they can communicate with the sponsors;
- Sponsors and the newcomers have agreed how often they will meet and communicate via phone calls video calls via Zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook, Viber, Skype, Google Hangouts or FaceTime.
- Sponsors and the newcomers are meeting and communicating on a regular basis via phone calls or video calls and both the sponsors and newcomers are able to understand one another (with or without the assistance of an interpreter or Google Translate).
- The newcomers know who to contact in the sponsoring group to arrange for additional food, items or supplies to be dropped off or delivered (with no contact) during the 14-day quarantine period.

- The newcomers are connected with a [settlement agency or a service providing organization](#) in their community of settlement and are receiving services and support remotely from a settlement worker/counsellor.
- Sponsors are assisting the newcomers with completing online applications for the Canada Child Benefit, provincial healthcare coverage and the Social Insurance Number (if not issued on arrival at the POE).
- Sponsors have provided the newcomers with a basic orientation over the phone or via video calls on the [Interim Federal Health Program \(IFHP\)](#) and its relationship with provincial healthcare coverage, their [rights and responsibilities](#), budgeting and [what to expect](#) when living in Canada.
- Sponsors are assisting the newcomers to understand how to access online shopping and, once the 14-day quarantine period has come to an end, curbside pick-up as needed.

## Resources on COVID-19

### General Resources and Information on COVID-19

- The Government of Canada's COVID-19 information and resource hub: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
- The latest information on the emergency order and the travel restrictions: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>
- COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool: <https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en>

### Resources on the Entry Requirements

Further information in several languages about the entry requirements and how persons can isolate at if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or quarantine if they are asymptomatic can be found at the following links:

- The requirements for persons without symptoms of COVID-19 arriving in Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/2019-novel-coronavirus-information-sheet.html>
- The requirements for persons with symptoms of COVID-19 arriving in Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/travellers-with-symptoms-return-canada.html>
- How to quarantine at home for persons without symptoms of COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-home-exposed-no-symptoms.html>
- How to isolate at home for persons that exhibit symptoms of COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-how-to-isolate-at-home.html>

## COVID-19 Awareness and Prevention Resources

Multi-language resources produced by the Government of Canada on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, how to prevent its spread, vulnerable persons and how to wear a mask or face covering can be found at the following links:

- About COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/about-coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
- Help reduce the spread of COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/help-reduce-spread-covid-19.html>
- The best way to wash your hands to reduce the spread of COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/reduce-spread-covid-19-wash-your-hands.html>
- Physical (social) distancing and how to slow the spread of COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/social-distancing.html>
- Vulnerable populations and COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/vulnerable-populations-covid-19.html>
- How to safely use a non-medical mask or face covering: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering.html>

## Guidance from IRCC for Private Sponsors Regarding COVID-19

- Available in English and French: <http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/latest-policy-program-update/guidance-from-ircc-for-private-sponsors-regarding-covid-19/>

## Appendix - Letter Template for Use by Sponsors Outlining Quarantine Plan

This letter template created by RSTP can be adapted for use by sponsors and given to the sponsored newcomers before they arrive in Canada.

This letter from the sponsors, along with the letters of introduction provided by the IOM, can then be presented by the newcomers to the PHAC and CBSA officers on arrival.

Sponsors must review the [entry requirements](#) and contact their [provincial or territorial public health agency](#) and their municipal government when preparing this letter to ensure that the information contained within it is in compliance with the latest requirements.

Sponsors may also wish to attach a copy of the Before Arrival checklist to their letter so the PHAC and CBSA officers have a better understanding of the arrangements the sponsors have made for the sponsored newcomers.

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[date]

Dear Public Health Agency of Canada and/or Canada Border Services Agency Officer,

**RE: [INSERT NAME OF SPONSORED NEWCOMERS AND G NUMBER FOR APPLICATION]**

We [insert name/type of sponsoring group] have sponsored the above named refugees to Canada under [remove programs that are not applicable] the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program/the Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) program/the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program.

The [insert name of sponsored newcomers] will be staying at [insert full address of accommodation], where they will quarantine for a 14-day period following their arrival.

Our sponsoring group has ensured that [insert name of sponsored newcomers] will have access to food, medicine and other supplies and essentials during their 14-day stay at the above address. They will also not have any contact with vulnerable persons during their stay at this address.

We have shared information with the newcomers on the entry requirements they must follow and the consequences of breaching the requirements. We will also continue having discussions with the newcomers about the requirements and consequences to ensure they understand them.

If you would like further information, or have any questions or concerns, please contact:

[insert name of someone from the sponsoring group, along with their primary telephone number and email address].

Yours faithfully,

[name of contact from sponsoring group/name of sponsoring group]