

# COVID-19: Policy & Protocol

Rwanda (March 7, 2022)

## Quick Summary of the Outbreak

1. The novel Coronavirus disease was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020.
2. Globally, as of 4 March 2022, there have been 440 807 756 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 5 978 096 deaths, reported to WHO.
3. For daily reports about the situation, please visit these links on the WHO website:
  - <https://covid19.who.int/>;
  - [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports)

## Symptoms of COVID-19

According to the CDC, people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as it learns more about COVID-19. Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

(Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)

## The Current Situation in Rwanda

1. The first case of COVID 19 was confirmed on March 14, 2020. As of 1 March 2022, there have been 4,856,625 cases of COVID-19 in Rwanda, with 1,457 related deaths. About 60% of the population has been fully vaccinated and the vaccination campaign is ongoing.

2. Some of the country-wide restrictions include:

- **Curfew is lifted. However, night clubs, live bands, receptions and betting activities shall close at 2 AM.**
- **Mandatory wearing of masks in public remains in effect.**

### Current Entry and Exit Requirements

1. Currently, travelers are permitted to enter Rwanda under the following conditions:

- **All travelers arriving in Rwanda** are required to have a negative COVID-19 certificate. The **only** accepted test is a SARS-CoV2 Real Time Polymerase (RT-PCR) performed **within 72 hours prior to departure for Rwanda. All other forms of COVID-19 tests are not permitted.**
- **A COVID-19 PCR will also be done upon arrival. An additional mandatory Rapid Test** will be performed **on day 3 from the arrival date** at a designated testing site (Camp Kigali or nearest Provincial or District Hospitals for those out of the City of Kigali) and at the own costs of the travelers.
- **Travelers must do self-isolation at the hotel that they have booked until they get a negative PCR test result taken on arrival.** Test results for the PCR test taken on arrival can be accessed on the RBC website (<https://his.hmis.moh.gov.rw/results/>) by using the phone number entered while filling the Passenger Locator Form and by using the code received. The turnaround time for results is 24 hours from the time a sample is collected. If the results are not out beyond 24 hours, the RBC Medical Team on duty 24/7 at the airport can be contacted on +(250) 781415724.
- At the airport, the payment for Covid-19 tests taken on arrival of 62,000 Frw or 65 USD (55 USD for Covid-19 tests and 10 USD for specific logistics to the airport) will be done as per the indications of the passenger Locator Form. For passengers who opt for a cash payment at arrival, the balance will be given in Local currency (Frw). The passenger who wouldn't use the payment methods on the passenger locator form may be required to pay again at arrival and claim for refund for any previous payment made.
- **All travelers arriving in Rwanda** must complete the **Passenger Locator Form** and upload their negative COVID-19 test certificate before their departure to Rwanda. The Passenger Locator Form is available on RBC's website <https://www.rbc.gov.rw/index.php?id=188>.
- **Land borders** shall re- open, starting Monday 07th March 2022. People may be subject to random Covid-19 testing by the Ministry of Health upon entry and are encouraged to be vaccinated before crossing the border.
- The Government of Rwanda has a zero-tolerance policy for exporting positive COVID-19 cases. If a traveler tests positive for COVID-19 upon arrival or during his/her time in Rwanda (even if fully vaccinated), the severity of the symptoms will determine whether the traveler is isolated in a government-run treatment center or a hotel at his/her own cost. Travelers will not be permitted to leave Rwanda until they receive a negative PCR test result, which could take several weeks from the first detection of your infection.
- **All travelers departing Rwanda** must test negative for COVID-19. The **only accepted test is a SARS-CoV2 Real Time Chain Polymerase (RT-PCR) performed within 72 hours before departure. All other tests are not permitted.** Travelers are encouraged to book and pay for their tests at least three days prior to departure through the online

platform <https://travel.rbc.gov.rw/selfreg/>. The cost of the test is USD 50, and payments can be made either by cash or debit/credit card. GEI can facilitate the payment process. **Passengers departing Rwanda should also always check the requirements for their destination countries.**

- **Passengers departing Rwanda are required to print out the travel certificate available through the COVID-19 Test Results Portal and hand carry them to enter the airport for departure.**
- RBC offers rapid antigen testing without appointment at dozens of accredited private hospitals/clinics throughout Rwanda. Rapid antigen tests cost approximately USD 5 (RWF 5,000). Rapid antigen test results are available shortly after the sample is taken and are delivered in person and/or via text message.

Source : <https://rw.usembassy.gov/health-alert-covid-19-information/>).

**For more information, please visit these websites:**

- The Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC) website is the source of detailed guidance for travelers to Rwanda. U.S. citizens are encouraged to read the “Info Note for Passengers”, with the link located on the left side of RBC’s website. <https://www.rbc.gov.rw/index.php?id=188>
- U.S. Embassy in Rwanda: <https://rw.usembassy.gov/health-alert-covid-19-information/>
- Rwandan Embassy in Washington D.C.: <https://rwandaembassy.org/>
- US Department of State: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Rwanda.html>
- CDC page on COVID-19: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html)

## GEI Global Policy

1. We take daily updates from core, factual, reliable sites:
  - [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public)
  - [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html)
  - [www.worldometers.info/coronavirus](http://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus)
  - Further local in-country sites for Rwanda
2. We immediately address and action any amendments required to the Company Protocol (see below) arising out of the updates.
3. We follow country-specific guidelines and protocols, and those may supersede our Company guidelines and protocols.
4. We disseminate the Company Protocol to all in-country staff (including all program managers and guides), and we train and update them before the start of every program.
5. We assess program managers and guides prior to each program of their up-to-date knowledge of the available information and their comfort with the Company Protocol.
6. We have an internal written document of our Company Protocol for all in-country staff on how to operate programs during the global COVID-19 spread.

## GEI Protocol

1. Our staff members are all fully vaccinated. Tourism personnel in Rwanda have been given priority to get vaccinated and a majority of them got vaccinated. As much as is possible to do so, we will only work with tourism personnel who have been vaccinated.
2. We have identified the government-appointed medical facilities/clinics/hospitals in Rwanda capable of providing the best available care to our clients if required. These are:
  - **The King Faysal Hospital** – Kacyiru, Gasabo district, Kigali, Rwanda. Tel: (+250) 252 588 888, [www.kfh.rw](http://www.kfh.rw)
  - **Legacy Clinic** – KK 3 Rd Kigali. Tel: (+250) 788 122 100. <https://legacyclinics.rw/>
  - **Kigali Citizen Polyclinic** – KG 176 St, Gasabo district, Kigali. Tel: (+250) 788 511 076. <https://kigalicitizenspolyclinic.rw/>

Please note that in case of severe COVID-19, the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) will refer the patient to the Nyarungenge District Hospital in Kigali and to District referral Hospitals outside of Kigali.

3. We provide our clients with local COVID-19 related information for pre-departure dissemination.
4. **We require that all our guests be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 at least 14 days before travelling to one of our destinations. We also advise our guests who are eligible for a booster dose of vaccine to get it at least a week before travelling.** Guests who cannot get

vaccinated because of a health condition could be exempt upon submission of a medical certificate attesting of the condition. We will review the medical certificate and take a decision on a case-by-case basis. Any further requirements that will be in place such as the submission of negative COVID-19 tests prior to departure and upon arrival will be communicated.

5. We request that our clients ensure that all program participants have adequate travel and medical insurance, including medical evacuation insurance.
6. Hotels and lodges require that we submit scanned passport copies for each program participant in advance.
7. **A COVID-19 Safety Officer will be assigned to each program.** The Safety Officer will be responsible for ensuring best practice is followed throughout the program by monitoring behavior, environment, and adherence to agreed hygiene measures. **For groups with up to 20 participants, the Program Manager or Guide will play this role and will be supported by other team members who will be on standby in case of an emergency.** For larger groups, the Program Manager or Guide will play this role as well as a second member of our team who will be appointed to be with the group.
8. Every GEI Program Manager/Guide (“Guide”) is individually briefed about key health and safety measures for each program. This includes the following:
  - On arrival, all guests are requested to alert the Guide immediately if they have any symptoms typical of a cold or flu at any time during the program. For this purpose, he/she ensures that all guests have access to his/her mobile phone/WhatsApp number and email address.
  - The Guide will also proactively approach any guest who shows symptoms (cough, fever, etc.). Such guest is asked to stay at the hotel, to wear a mask, and to avoid contact with other people as much as possible.
  - In case of any concern at any time during the program, the Guide organizes an evaluation by a medical practitioner as soon as possible and follows said practitioner’s instructions. He/she will also immediately alert the GEI local office and GEI’s global head office.
  - If the guest is suspected of having, or is diagnosed with, COVID-19, the Guide shall follow the GEI policies and also follow the instructions of the local authorities and health facilities. He/she shall also keep GEI’s global Head Office informed at all times so that Head Office can alert and communicate with the client and any emergency contacts.
9. Specific preventive measures will be put in place and include the following:
  - Participants must keep a social distance of 1.5 meters at all times.
  - Participants must wear a mask when their temperature is being checked, when visiting public places or when adhering to social distancing of 1.5 meters is not possible.
  - Participants must wear a mask when requested by the Safety Officer.
  - Masks should meet the following requirements:
    - Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric
    - Must completely cover the nose and mouth
    - Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don’t have gaps
    - Have a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask

**We strongly recommend that participants use N95 masks (if those are available in their country) or surgical masks. We do not recommend that participants use cloth masks as those do not offer sufficient protection. Please note that N95 masks are not always available at pharmacies in Rwanda, so it is important that participants bring their own. Surgical masks are available from most pharmacies.**

- It is important to change face masks that **cannot be washed or reused at least every day** and to dispose safely of any used face masks in a bin bag that is then closed tightly.
- If masks are taken off, it is important to place them somewhere safe to keep them clean, such as in the pocket, purse, or in a paper bag.
- Participants must avoid shaking hands and regularly use hand sanitizers.
- Vehicle configuration and utilization limits will be applied as per industry protocols and per agreement with client.
- Participants will be encouraged to occupy the same seat for the day, if not the whole program.
- Number of occupants on game drive vehicles will be limited.
- Accommodation: **Single rooms will be reserved for all participants unless otherwise instructed. If rooms are to be shared, rooming lists are to be adhered to and not changed during the course of the program.**

#### 10. Personal protective equipment (PPE):

- No PPE (including facemasks) or cleaning/sanitizing supplies will be provided for travelers unless specifically requested and travelers will be expected to bring their own.
- Hand sanitizers will be available on embarkation and disembarkation of vehicles, and at all sites in line with global industry protocols.
- GEI will have on hand a limited emergency supply of face masks should guests need to buy some for themselves. It will be a small supply and guests are generally expected to have enough masks for the duration of the trip.
- GEI will supply face masks and sanitizer for all ground staff and drivers.

#### 11. Temperature checks and symptoms scanning:

- **Daily temperature checks and visual assessment of any COVID-19 related symptoms will be conducted and recorded by the GEI Safety Officer/guide.**
- Additionally, guests will also be asked to self-monitor and immediately inform the guide if they have a temperature of 38 C (36.7 C on the wrist) or higher and/or if they are feeling unwell.
- **During the daily monitoring by GEI, the Safety Officer/guide will do the following:**
  - Take every participant's temperature with a handheld thermometer.
  - Assess if a participant is showing any other symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Wear a face mask while doing the readings, and so must each program participant.
  - Have a clip board with a participant list for every day, where the reading of each participant will be recorded every day, thus always keeping the record up to date.

- If the temperature check by the Safety Officer/guide shows that a person has an initial elevated temperature (38 C or higher on the forehead/36.7 or higher on the wrist), the test will be repeated 10 minutes later. If the temperature is still high, the participant will be sent to his/ her room, and the temperature check will be repeated an hour later by the Safety Officer or by a GEI member of staff. If the temperature is still high an hour later, the GEI Safety officer or GEI member of staff will call the nurse on duty and the participant will have to take a PCR test at his/her own cost. If the group is out in the field, the participant will be requested to wear a face mask at all times and will be seated on the back seat of the bus, until the temperature check can be repeated an hour later. If the temperature is still high an hour later, the participant will be taken to the nearest hospital for a check-up. The cost of the PCR test will be at the participant's expense.
  - **Reminder: Temperature screening will not identify a person who has COVID-19 who is asymptomatic (not showing any symptoms), does not have an elevated temperature as one of their symptoms, or is on medication that reduces their temperature. A person may also have an elevated temperature for other reasons, including a medical condition not related to COVID-19.**
  - If a participant does not have a temperature but is showing other signs of COVID-19 during the program, he/she will be asked to self-isolate until a PCR test is conducted. If the group is out in the field, the participant will be requested to wear a face mask at all times and will be seated on the back seat of the bus or be taken to the nearest hospital for a check-up. The PCR test will be at the participant's own cost.
  - All lodges and hotels temperature screen their guests daily, upon entering reception & restaurant area(s) and bar(s). In case any person has a high temperature (confirmed 38 C or higher on the forehead/36.7 C or higher on the wrist), he/ she has to go to an isolation room at the hotel until a doctor or nurse can be dispatched to perform the COVID test. **The isolation room and COVID test will be for the guest's own account. The GEI COVID Safety Officer will arrange this together with the hotel as conveniently and economically as possible.**
12. PCR tests can be booked online through the online platform <https://travel.rbc.gov.rw/selfreg/>. PCR tests cost approximately USD 50. Payment is required for U.S. citizens. PCR test results are generally delivered within 48 hours via text message (results only) and through the RBC's COVID-19 Test Results Portal at <https://his.hmis.moh.gov.rw/results/>.
  13. **Any travelers who contract COVID-19 while in the country will be required to self-isolate or quarantine in line with government regulations at that time. Their participation in their program will be suspended for the duration of their isolation (if not for the rest of the program depending on logistics and time remaining on the program) and any costs incurred are to be covered by participants and/or their institution. Travel and medical insurance are compulsory and expected to be in place.**
  14. **Currently, the number of days to self-isolate for vaccinated people with COVID-19 has changed to a minimum of 7 days. Vaccinated people will end self-isolation after a minimum of 7 days if result from a PCR test is negative. Travelers who test positive and undertake 10 days of isolation but remain positive on PCR with CT values above 37, negative rapid diagnostic test and without any COVID-19 symptoms will be given a**

recovery certificate which may be used for travel out of Rwanda provided their airlines as well as transiting and final destination countries allow it.

15. In the event of a positive diagnosis, a decision on whether the other program participants need to be tested and possibly even self-isolated as well is taken together with local health authorities. In general, GEI recommends that program participants get a PCR test done 3 to 5 days after exposure. The PCR tests will be at the participants own costs. If a participant is positive, isolation rooms will be made available at the hotels and lodges at the participants' own cost.
16. If necessary, GEI's global head office will decide together with the client and the local health authorities whether to proceed with or cancel the program.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** The information provided in this document has been researched carefully but due to the current situation, it changes regularly so we cannot guarantee its accuracy. We invite our guests to always check the travel updates and restrictions both in their home country and Rwanda before traveling.