



Checking foreign vaccination certificates

From November 2021, some travellers to and from Australia will be subject to different rules if they can prove they are fully vaccinated.

What does it mean to be fully vaccinated?

Each country has its own definition. Australia's is set by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). A person is fully vaccinated if they have completed a course, including a mixed dose, of a vaccine **approved** or **recognised** by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

Current approved and recognised vaccines and dosages are:

- Two doses at least 14 days apart of:
 - AstraZeneca Vaxzevria
 - AstraZeneca Covishield
 - Pfizer/Biontech Comirnaty
 - Moderna Spikevax
 - Sinovac Coronovac
 - Bharat Covaxin
 - Sinopharm BBIBP-CorV (for ages 18-60 only)
- Or one dose of:
 - Johnson & Johnson/Janssen-Cilag COVID Vaccine.

Seven days must have passed since the final dose of vaccine in a course of immunisation. Mixed doses count towards being fully vaccinated as long as all vaccines are approved or recognised by the TGA. Doses of Sinopharm BBIBP-CorV only count towards being fully vaccinated if administered when the traveller was aged from 18 to 60 years. See the additional guidance on Sinopharm brand names below.

Travellers who have not been vaccinated with the above doses or schedule do not meet Australia's definition of 'fully vaccinated'.

The TGA is reviewing other COVID-19 vaccines that may be recognised for the purposes of inbound travel to Australia in future. Information on the latest approved and recognised vaccines is available on the TGA website.

How will travellers prove they're fully vaccinated?

By presenting either an **Australian International Vaccination Certificate** or a vaccination certificate issued in a **foreign country**. Travellers who present a foreign vaccination certificate will also make a legally binding attestation in their Australian Travel Declaration (ATD) that the certificate is true and that they are fully vaccinated.

Who will check that travellers are fully vaccinated?

Until the Digital Passenger Declaration becomes available, **airlines** will perform this check when a traveller checks in.

How do I check a foreign vaccination certificate?

Airlines will need to confirm at check-in that the **foreign** certificate is **acceptable** and shows that the traveller meets **Australia's** definition of **fully vaccinated**.

Many foreign certificates come in digital formats that can **easily** be **verified** using government or industry apps. Many airlines are **already familiar** with these apps from using them to verify PCR test results. And many airlines have trialled, or are implementing, apps that can read multiple types of certificate, such as the IATA TravelPass. Airlines are **strongly encouraged** to use these apps, where available, to verify that foreign vaccination certificates are authentic.

What kinds of foreign vaccination certificate are there?

Australia is the first country to introduce a vaccination certificate that meets the new **Visible Digital Seal (VDS) standard set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)**. That means that all certificates currently issued by other countries are in a different format to Australia's.

Some places only issue certificates on **paper**. Some use digital formats that are **unique** to their own jurisdiction. But aside from ICAO VDS there are three main **digital** formats that airlines can digitally authenticate with available apps:

- DIVOC (CoWIN) - used by some countries in South Asia and elsewhere
- EU DCC - used by all EU countries and a number of others
- SMART Health Cards - used mainly in North America

See below for a list of which jurisdictions currently issue what type of certificate.

What kinds of foreign vaccination certificate are acceptable?

Because of the protection offered by high **vaccination rates** in Australia, and the penalties for making false **attestations**, Australia is taking an **inclusive** approach to accepting foreign vaccination certificates. **Any** foreign certificate – paper or digital – is acceptable as long as:

- it was issued by a national or state/provincial-level authority or an accredited vaccination provider (for example a pharmacy, or a doctor/nurse signing an entry in a WHO yellow book)
- it's in English, or accompanied by a certified translation
- it shows
 - the traveller's name as it appears in the passport
 - either traveller's date of birth or passport number
 - the vaccine brand name, and
 - either the date of each dose or the date on which the traveller completed a full course of immunisation.

The presumption is always that a certificate is acceptable unless there's a **clear reason for doubt**, such as:

- it comes from an obviously inappropriate issuer (say, an MP or minister of religion)
- it's in an unfamiliar digital format that doesn't say who issued it
- it's in a foreign language, with no translation
- the passport number and passport biographic details don't match the certificate.

What if a traveller isn't fully vaccinated?

Travellers aged 12 years and over who don't meet **Australia's** definition of fully vaccinated may still be able to travel, but only under the rules for unvaccinated travel, unless they are medically exempt.

What if a traveller meets my airline's definition of fully vaccinated but not Australia's?

Australia's definition is what counts.

What if a traveller has recovered from COVID with only one vaccine dose of a two-dose course?

Australia's definition of fully vaccinated doesn't include this scenario. Travellers will not meet the definition of fully vaccinated unless they've received a full course of vaccine, are under 12 years of age or are medically exempt.

It is important that people who have had COVID-19 get vaccinated when it is safe to do so.

What if a traveller is medically unable to be vaccinated?

The traveller will need to provide **evidence of a medical contraindication**. This must indicate an inability to be vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine because of a medical condition, as evidenced by a certificate containing:

- the traveller's name as it appears in the passport
- details of the issuing medical practitioner and the date of the consultation
- details that clearly state that the traveller has a medical condition which means they cannot receive a COVID-19 vaccination (i.e. vaccination is contraindicated).

Travellers who have received non-TGA approved or recognised vaccines cannot be considered medically contraindicated or treated as fully vaccinated for travel purposes.

States and Territories may not accept medical exemptions.

What about children?

All children aged **under 12 years** count as fully vaccinated for travel purposes. [Special arrangements](#) apply for certain returning Australian children **aged 12-17 years** who are not fully vaccinated.

What are the rules for translations?

Translations have to be certified with the stamp or membership number of a professional translation association. The entire certificate has to be translated, not just part of it.

What if the certificate doesn't show the entire name that's in the passport?

Some certificates truncate names or don't include middle names. That's not a problem. As long as the name on the certificate is **not materially different** to the name in the passport it is acceptable.

What if the name in a vaccination certificate is materially different to the passport name?

The traveller will need to provide evidence of being the person named on the certificate, such as a marriage certificate, driver licence or national identity card.

What if the certificate doesn't show the entire name of the vaccine?

Some certificates truncate the name of a vaccine brand compared to how it appears in the list above. For instance, certificates might refer only to 'Biontech', 'Comirnaty', 'AstraZeneca' or 'Johnson & Johnson'. This is acceptable.

A certificate is not acceptable if it includes the name or part name of a vaccine not currently approved or recognised by the TGA.

Different rules apply for Sinopharm brand names (see below).

What are the rules for Sinopharm brand names?

There are two kinds of Sinopharm vaccine. One is from Beijing and one from Wuhan, although both may also be produced at other locations.

Only the Beijing vaccine is recognised by the TGA. It comes from the Beijing Bio-Institute of Biological Products (BBIBP), also known as the Beijing Institute of Biological Products (BIBP).

The brand name on a certificate shows the Beijing version, and is **acceptable**, if it meets the following criteria:

- contains the expressions 'BBIBP' or 'BIBP'
- spells out BBIBP or BIBP
- contains the words 'Sinopharm' and 'Beijing', or
- contains the trade name 'Covilo'.

Sinopharm brand names can also include other expressions such as 'CNBG', 'Cor-V' and 'Vero Cells'. These are **not** relevant to whether the vaccine is recognised by the TGA.

Examples of brand names that meet the above criteria and are **acceptable** include:

- Sinopharm BBIBP-CorV
- Sinopharm BBIBP
- Beijing Bio-Institute of Biological Products
- Beijing Institute of Biological Products
- Sinopharm BIBP
- Sinopharm BIBP-CorV
- Sinopharm CNBG BBIBP
- Sinopharm CNBG BIBP
- Sinopharm Covid Vaccine BIBP
- Sinopharm Beijing
- BBIBP-CorV
- BBIBP (Vero Cells)
- BIBP
- BIBP-CorV
- Sinopharm Covilo
- Covilo

There are many possible combinations – this list is not exhaustive. Any brand name that meets the above criteria is acceptable

Examples of brand names that do not meet the above criteria and are **unacceptable** include:

- Sinopharm
- Sinopharm (Vero Cells)
- Sinopharm WIBP
- Sinopharm Wuhan

'Sinopharm' by itself is unacceptable because there is no way of telling whether it refers to the Beijing or Wuhan vaccine. The same goes for 'Sinopharm (Vero Cells)'.

What if a traveller has received vaccinations in different countries?

Travellers can present multiple vaccination certificates to prove their vaccination status, as long as each certificate complies with this guidance. It is also acceptable if a traveller presents a single certificate that lists vaccinations received in different countries. A certificate does not have to be issued by the country in which the vaccination was administered.

Can I call someone for help?

For privacy reasons, the Government has no service that airlines can contact to confirm whether a particular Australian certificate is genuine or has the correct details.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) provides information on vaccines www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccines.

Annex: Examples of digital foreign certificate formats:

Note: this list is **not authoritative or exhaustive** and is subject to **frequent change** as countries move from paper to digital certificates.

DIVOC certificates that can be verified **online** by scanning the QR code. Issued by:

India (international certificate)

The Philippines

Sri Lanka

EU DCC certificates that can be verified with **EU government apps**. Issued by **all EU countries**, plus:

Albania

Andorra

Switzerland

Faroe Islands

Israel

Iceland

Liechtenstein

Morocco

Monaco

North Macedonia

Norway

Panama

San Marino

Turkey

Ukraine

United Kingdom

Vatican City

SMART Health cards that can be verified using an app or by scanning the QR code, for instance:

Canadian provinces

California

Hawaii

Louisiana

New York state

Virginia

Washington state

Major US pharmacy chains

COVID-19 vaccination certificates in the Apple Health app (iOS15) are SMART Health cards

Places that use **unique digital solutions**:

China

Hong Kong, China

Libya

Malaysia

Qatar

Russia

Singapore

South Africa

Thailand

United States – New Jersey, Utah and others