



## Documents Related to COVID-19

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## U.S./International Media Statement

The safety of Puerto Rican residents and all visitors to our Island is our utmost priority as the world comes together to minimize the spread of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Despite the single digit number of cases on the Island to date, Puerto Rico has put an Island-wide issues management plan in place as a preventative measure and is exercising an abundance of caution with new policies in place for residents and tourists to avoid mass spread of COVID-19 throughout the Island. The mandates below are being strictly enforced, which means residents and tourists need to abide by these new policies or they will be subject to significant repercussions.

- Due diligence is needed across all crucial ports of entry and exit and for this reason, beginning early this week, the Government of Puerto Rico has activated the Puerto Rico National Guard to assist with enhanced health screenings of all passengers upon arrival into SJU, which consists of a brief temperature check, with further screening at the airport, if necessary.
- The Island is establishing an Island-wide curfew effective immediately for everyone, including tourists, from 9:00PM - 5:00AM, through March 30, 2020. The only exceptions are for those who are working or in cases of emergency.
- Like many U.S. cities and states, the Island is promoting social distancing and suspending all large events on the Island until March 30, 2020. This is in accordance with the CDC's guidance for [large events and mass gatherings](#) that recommends organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the U.S.
- All non-essential businesses, including theaters, malls, casinos, bars, gyms, attractions such tours, national parks and public beaches, and "any place that promotes the gathering of citizens in one place" are closed.
- Supermarkets, pharmacies, gas stations and other essential businesses like restaurants that offer takeout or delivery will only be open through 6:00PM.
- Taxis will only work from 5:00AM - 9:00PM with the exception of those servicing the airports.

We're following guidance from leading global health authorities, who continue to urge travelers to adhere to healthy travel practices to help protect themselves and prevent the spread of disease. These are the same best practices that are standard for a typical flu season, and include avoiding close contact with people who show signs of illness, avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, and washing your hands often with soap or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) coronavirus (COVID-19) [webpage on prevention and treatment](#) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage](#).

## Group Travel Reactive Statement

The safety of Puerto Rican residents and all visitors to our Island is our utmost priority as the world comes together to minimize the spread of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Despite the single digit number of cases on the Island to date, Puerto Rico has put an Island-wide issues management plan in place as a preventative measure and is exercising an abundance of caution with new policies in place to avoid mass spread of COVID-19 throughout the Island. The mandates below are being strictly enforced, which means residents and groups/tourists need to abide by these new policies or they will be subject to significant repercussions.

Like many states and cities across the U.S., the Governor of Puerto Rico has suspended all events on the Island until the end of March. This is in accordance with the CDC's guidance for [large events and mass gatherings](#) that recommends organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the U.S. Additionally, there is an Island-wide curfew effective immediately for everyone, including groups/tourists, from 9:00PM - 5:00AM, through March 30, 2020. The only exceptions are for those who are working or in cases of emergency. We are ensuring our industry partners and peers have the latest information to address concerns from groups with scheduled travel, with the safety and health of travelers and those who work in tourism as our top priority.

While meetings and events have been postponed at this time, meeting facilities on the Island are ready to receive groups when these restrictions are lifted and have implemented additional measures to ensure the safety of visiting groups. For instance, the Puerto Rico Convention Center has taken the following action:

- Increasing signage with advisable precautions (e.g. handwashing, encouragement not to shake hands)
- Increasing hand sanitizer stations in various locations throughout the facility
- Thoroughly enhancing the cleaning of high traffic areas of the building with proper cleaning products
- Increasing the cleaning of high-touch point areas such as purchase devices, door handles, elevator buttons, escalator handrails and restrooms.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions about group travel. More information can be found in the FAQ on the DiscoverPuertoRico.com website. If you have questions about specific events, please contact the facility or business with which you have organized lodging and/or activities.

For more information guidance, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage.](#)

## Reactive Messages for Travelers

- The safety of Puerto Rican residents and all visitors to our Island is our utmost priority as we work together to minimize the spread of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).
- Despite the single digit number of cases on the Island to date, Puerto Rico has put an Island-wide issues management in place as a preventative measure and is exercising an abundance of caution with new policies in place to avoid mass spread of COVID-19 throughout the Island.
- The mandates below are being strictly enforced, which means residents and tourists need to abide by these new policies or they will be subject to significant repercussions, which consist of a fine of up to \$5,000 and the risk of being arrested.
- Below is key information to be aware of:
  - The Government of Puerto Rico has activated the Puerto Rico National Guard to assist with enhanced health screenings of all passengers upon arrival into SJU, which consists of a brief temperature check, with further screening at the airport, if necessary.
  - Like many U.S. cities and states, the Island is promoting social distancing by suspending all large events on the Island until March 30, 2020. This is in accordance with [recently released](#) CDC guidelines.
  - The Island has established an Island-wide curfew from 9:00PM - 5:00AM, through March 30, 2020. The only exceptions are those who are working or in cases of emergency.
  - All non-essential businesses, including theaters, malls, casinos, bars, gyms, attractions such tours, national parks and public beaches, and “any place that promotes the gathering of citizens in one place” are closed.
  - Supermarkets, pharmacies, gas stations and other essential businesses like restaurants that offer takeout or delivery will only be open through 6:00PM.
  - Taxis will only work from 5:00AM to 9:00PM with the exception of those servicing the airports.
- Leading health organizations recommend those who are sick to delay or avoid travel. The CDC recommends that “because COVID-19 can be more serious in older adults and those with chronic medical conditions, people in these groups should talk to a healthcare provider and consider postponing travel.”

- Leading health authorities recommend using the same [protection best practices](#) as you would for the flu season:
  - Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or sneezing.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (that contains at least 60% alcohol).
- Call the nearest hospital if you are concerned you may have COVID-19. Symptoms include, but are not limited to, fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath. The Puerto Rico Department of Health (PRDH) has specific protocols to screen and test patients, and it's important to follow their direction to get the right care and stay safe.

## Q&A

### Is it safe to travel to Puerto Rico? Should I / should travelers cancel their trips?

If you are sick, an older adult, and someone with chronic medical conditions, leading health authorities recommend to delay or avoid travel.

### If I'm in Puerto Rico or going to Puerto Rico, are things open or operating normally?

It is important that travelers are aware of what to expect upon arriving to Puerto Rico. It's also important for travelers to understand the new policies in place and being strictly enforced. Residents and tourists need to abide by these new policies or they will be subject to significant repercussions, which consist of a fine of up to \$5,000 and run the risk of being arrested. Below find information on key travel operations.

- **Airports:** Remain open for inbound and outbound travel. Adjustments in travel itineraries are at the discretion of each airline, in accordance with travel restrictions, as determined by the U.S. federal government. Usual operations at the airport are not affected by the curfew, which means passengers arriving or departing from the airports after curfew will be able to transit to and from their respective destination.
- **Cruise operations:** The San Juan Bay is currently closed for cruise ship vessels.
- **Hotels:** Remain open, however, public areas and amenities in hotels, such as spas, pools, and recreational areas will be closed. Room service will remain available for guests. Restaurants inside hotels will remain open but limited to those that can offer their services by way of carry out or delivery versus sit-down services. Bars inside restaurants will be closed.
- **Casinos:** Will remain closed until March 30, 2020.
- **Restaurants:** Will remain open but, limited to those that can offer their services by way of drive thru, carry out, or delivery. Restaurants will not be hosting guests in a sit-down manner. Bars inside restaurants will also be closed.

- **Attractions:** All businesses will be closed with the exception of pharmacies, supermarkets, banks, or those related to the food or pharmaceutical industries. This applies to shopping malls, movie theaters, concert halls, casinos, bars, liquor stores, or any other place that facilitates gatherings. This also includes natural state reserves, national parks, recreational areas and public beaches.
- **Tours:** All tours will be closed until further notice.

### **How can travelers protect themselves?**

We urge travelers to adhere to the new measures put in place by the government of Puerto Rico, which includes abiding by the new curfew rules and other measures. The new mandates are being strictly enforced, which means residents and tourists need to abide by these new policies or they will be subject to repercussions, which consist of a fine of up to \$5,000 or being arrested.

Additionally, travelers should adhere to healthy travel practices to help protect themselves and prevent the spread of disease. These are the same personal best practices that are standard for a typical flu season, and include avoiding close contact with people who show signs of illness, avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, and washing your hands often with soap or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. For more information, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage](#).

### **What should travelers do if they begin experiencing COVID-19 symptoms? What immediate steps should they take?**

Travelers experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should stay in their hotel rooms and contact their hotel front desk to get support. If travelers are not staying at a hotel, contact the nearest hospital directly. It's important that travelers and hotel staff call hospitals first before going there, so that appropriate transportation, screening and care can be arranged, to protect those feeling ill and others.

### **What is the Island doing to prepare? What precautions is the Island taking to prevent the introduction / spread of coronavirus?**

Like many states and cities across the U.S., the Governor of Puerto Rico declared a state of emergency to make additional resources available and has activated the National Guard as part of the Island's measures to prepare. This is in addition to the funds previously made available on the Island to help our hospitals prepare to treat anyone with symptoms. The Governor of Puerto Rico also announced that all events on the Island have been postponed until the end of March.

Additionally, as a preventative measure, the government of Puerto Rico issued an Island-wide curfew, which is in effect from 9:00PM - 5:00AM, through March 30, 2020. Strict social distancing measures are in place, where businesses such as malls, casinos, gyms, attractions like

national parks and public beaches will be closed, with the exception of pharmacies, gas stations, banks, and supermarkets. The Puerto Rico national guard will conduct enhanced screening measures at all gateways on the Island. This will consist of a brief temperature check upon arrival to San Juan international airport.

The tourism industry in Puerto Rico has also taken specific steps to ensure that partners on the Island and their teams have the latest information on COVID-19, including prevention measures on the Island, personal prevention tips to use themselves and to share with travelers, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and guidance for what to do if they or their guests begin experiencing symptoms.

### **What is the expected economic impact?**

It is too early to estimate what impact it will have on the Island's tourism industry. While we cannot predict the future, we feel confident in the precautionary measures and protocols in place on our Island. Like any destination, we're watching news about COVID-19 closely.

### **Are Island hospitals equipped to address coronavirus?**

All hospitals on the Island have established protocols for admitting, treating and collecting samples from patients who are experiencing symptoms, and hospital staff will work with the Department of Health if testing is needed. Funds have been made available on the Island to help hospitals prepare facilities, purchase materials and train nurses and paramedic staff.

Puerto Rico also has epidemiologists throughout the Island, who specialize in disease control and prevention, to advise on transportation, testing and care for individuals who think they may have COVID-19.

### **Does the Island have the funds necessary to adequately prepare for coronavirus?**

Puerto Rico's Financial Oversight and Management Board has made \$5 million available so far to help the government prepare.

### **What guidance is being given to those in the tourism sector to prevent the spread of disease?**

Along with the Puerto Rico Tourism Company (PRTC), we have provided guidance and information to all tourism partners. The industry has specific measures in place to ensure hotel management, businesses, and other partners have the latest information on COVID-19, including prevention measures on the Island, personal prevention tips for their teams and travelers, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and guidance for what to do if their staff or guests begin experiencing symptoms.

### **Where will people be housed if they need to be quarantined?**

If cases arise, these decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis with local health authorities. Hospitals are preparing facilities now for potential patients, if cases arise. If hotel guests are

directed to self-isolate by the CDC, CBP or PRDH, there are protocols for management to follow to keep staff safe.

### **What will hotels, restaurants and tour operators do if a staff member tests positive?**

The CDC has outlined [specific guidance for businesses and employers](#), with information on what to do if employees are sick, cleaning advice and contingency planning.

Along with the Puerto Rico Tourism Company (PRTC), we have also provided guidance and information to all tourism partners. The industry has specific measures in place to ensure hotel management, businesses, and other partners within the industry have the latest information on COVID-19, including prevention measures on the Island, personal prevention tips for their teams and travelers, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and guidance for what to do if their staff or guests begin experiencing symptoms.

It is critical to seek medical advice from a regional epidemiologist if you are concerned your [guests or staff may have COVID-19](#). Symptoms include, but are not limited to, fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath. The Puerto Rico Health Department has specific protocols in place with state epidemiologists to screen and test patients. More information on specific steps can be found in the [latest industry guidance from the Puerto Rico Tourism Company](#).

### **What will hotels, restaurants and tour operators do if a tourist who has recently visited them tests positive?**

Along with the Puerto Rico Tourism Company (PRTC), we have provided guidance and information to all tourism partners. The industry has specific measures in place to ensure hotel management, businesses, and other partners have the latest information on COVID-19, including prevention measures on the Island, personal prevention tips for their teams and travelers, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and guidance for what to do if their staff or guests begin experiencing symptoms. More information on specific steps can be found in the [latest industry guidance from the Puerto Rico Tourism Company](#). This guidance is consistent with what the CDC has outlined [for businesses and employers](#).

### **Are there any closures in attractions, hotels, restaurants, events, and/or meeting venues?**

The Governor of Puerto Rico issued an island wide curfew, which is in effect from 9:00PM - 5:00AM, through March 30, 2020, for residents and tourists. Strict social distancing measures are in place, where businesses such as malls, casinos, gyms, attractions like national parks and public beaches are closed with the exception of pharmacies, gas stations, banks, and supermarkets - which will close at 6:00PM. These mandates are being strictly enforced, which means residents and tourists need to abide by these new policies or they will be subject to significant repercussions, which consist of a fine of up to \$5,000 or being arrested.



Additionally, the Island is promoting social distancing by suspending all large events on the Island until March 30, 2020. This is in accordance with the CDC's guidance for [large events and mass gatherings](#) that recommends organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the U.S.

We are recommending that travelers connect with their hotels and/or hosts for more information about their specific protocols beyond these.

### **Given the curfew issued by the Governor of Puerto Rico, do tourists have to stay in their rooms?**

Yes, unless they need to go to a pharmacy, supermarket or other essential business for a need. While recent government mandates may disrupt current tourism activity on the Island through March 30, keeping our visitors and residents safe is our number one priority right now.

Strict social distancing measures are in place, where businesses such as malls, casinos, gyms, and attractions such as state parks, golf courses and beaches, are closed. The only businesses that will be open are pharmacies, gas stations, banks, and supermarkets - but they will close daily at 6:00PM. Additionally, the Island established an Island-wide curfew from 9:00PM - 5:00AM, through March 30, 2020, for residents and tourists. The only exceptions are those who are working or in cases of emergency. These mandates are being strictly enforced, which means residents and tourists need to abide by these new policies or they will be subject to significant repercussions, which consist of a fine of up to \$5,000 or being arrested.

Hotels and other accommodation options remain open, however, public areas and amenities in hotels, such as spas, pools, golf courses and recreational areas will be closed. Room service will remain available for guests.

We recommend travelers speak to front desk personnel or their short-term rental hosts to better understand other accommodation protocols in place.

### **Can tourists staying at hotels use the pool and/or go to the beach?**

No. Even though hotels remain open, public areas and amenities in hotels, such as spas, pools, golf courses and recreational areas will be closed. Tourists should remain in their rooms during the duration of their stay and practice social distancing. We recommend travelers reach out to their respective hotel property or short-term rental host for further guidance on protocols.

While these government mandates may disrupt your visit to the Island, keeping our visitors and residents safe is our number one priority right now.

### **Can I hang out in the lobby of my hotel when I'm in Puerto Rico?**

Even though hotels remain open, public areas and amenities in hotels, such as spas, pools, golf courses and recreational areas will be closed. Room service will remain available for guests.

Restaurants inside hotels will remain open but limited to those that can offer their services by way of carry out or delivery versus sit-down services. Bars inside restaurants will be closed.

**Are the beaches OK to go to if I keep my distance from people?**

Public beaches are closed. Following the recommendations of the Governor of Puerto Rico to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources announced the closure of all natural reserves, state forests, wildlife refuges, recreational areas and public beaches. These measures are in effect until March 30. These mandates are being strictly enforced, which means residents and tourists need to abide by these new policies or they will be subject to significant repercussions, which consist of a fine of up to \$5,000 or being arrested. While these government mandates may disrupt your visit to the Island, keeping our visitors and residents safe is our number one priority right now.

**If I am out on the street strolling, will I get in trouble?**

The government of Puerto Rico is taking these mandates very seriously as the world is tackling the COVID-19 disease in hopes of slowing it down. By being out, you run the risk of being fined up to \$5,000 or being arrested. We strongly encourage all visitors to abide by the new social distancing mandates put into place on the Island through March 30, 2020.