



Ministry of Health, Wellness & Elderly Affairs

*Communications on this subject
should be addressed to:
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Press Release

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

On every occasion that I have addressed you, I have explained to you the severe challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic poses to our lives, the lives of our family and friends and our livelihoods.

I have urged your full support in curbing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and have never doubted that the majority of you would do the right thing to help move our country closer to normalcy. This has also been the focus of the Cabinet and the COVID-19 Management Centre.

After the festive season last year, the Ministry of Health noted an increase in COVID-19 cases due to breaches in quarantine and participation of individuals in large social gatherings. The government encourages all Saint Lucians to follow the protocols stipulated to avoid some of the mistakes of last year.

At present, there is the additional challenge of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus which has been named by the World Health Organization as a “variant of concern” and which has been identified in several countries in Europe and North America. In the UK, a major source market for visitors, 11 cases have been identified.

So far, very little is known about how quickly Omicron spreads and the severity of illness that it can cause. The Government is aware that at least 2 Caribbean countries have imposed travel bans on flights and on visitor arrivals from Southern Africa. The Government through the COVID-19 Management Centre and the Ministry of Health is carefully monitoring the situation. Discussions are ongoing with the Caribbean Regional Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to roll-out a test that local labs can use to spot this variant of concern. As soon as this is done, the Ministry of Health will be

increasing its testing and contact tracing capabilities with a focus on testing at our ports of entry and in communities. If the early science should warrant it, the Government will do all that it must do to protect the lives of Saint Lucians.

As it stands right now, Cabinet has made the decision to keep the existing protocols for the month of December and January. However, given the recent announcement of Omicron as a Variant of concern and the possibility of mass transmission during the festive season, the Cabinet may have to revisit some of the protocols. We are closely monitoring the situation and a further announcement will be made as soon as more information is available.

Permit me to remind you of the key aspects of the protocols that are now in place and will continue for the period December 1st to January 14, 2022.

- In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, a person shall remain confined to their place of residence Mondays to Saturdays from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. each day and Sundays from 5 p.m. to 4 a.m. the following day.
- A person shall not operate on a road a public omnibus that is loaded with more than 12 passengers
- An event approved by the Ministry of Health should not have more than 100 fully vaccinated persons in attendance that consists of staff, service providers and other support personnel
- A faith-based organisation may hold a daily or regular religious ceremony and should comply with the square footage allowed in keeping with their COVID-19 response plan
- A certified accommodation provider may provide recreational or social activities during the hours as specified under the COVID-19 order
- A certified accommodation provider or an approved tourism establishment may permit a fully vaccinated person access to the services offered by the provider or establishment.

All other protocols remain in effect.

As usual, we urge everyone to cooperate with the police officers.

The Government reminds incoming unvaccinated travellers' who will be placed in state quarantine that they are expected to meet the cost of their quarantine.

Fellow Saint Lucians, as we move into the Festive Season, I urge you to stay alert and protect yourselves. Every time we lower our guard the virus gains momentum.