

COVID-19 Prevention Actions
2022-2023 Winter/Spring

(Version 1.1 Draft)



Kutchan Tourism Association

November 29, 2022

1. Purpose

The new coronavirus infection (COVID-19) has placed restrictions on domestic and international travel over the past three years, which has protected the local population from infectious disease, but has also been a major challenge to Kutchan Town. It has also reduced the opportunities for people to experience diversity, to travel and experience new values, which is one of life's pleasures.

The guidelines for COVID-19 have been developed based on scientific evidence to deepen mutual understanding between residents and travelers, with the aim of resuming inbound tourism, which is a major industry in Kutchan Town, while protecting the safety and security of residents. This guideline is following the new infection control guidelines of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the guidelines of travel-related industry associations and will be revised as necessary to incorporate the feedbacks of the local community.

- Infection Control Based on Scientific Evidence

New scientific evidence on novel coronavirus infection (COVID-19) has been accumulated and vaccination has progressed significantly in Kutchan Town, including mass vaccination in resort areas. The new guidelines have been proposed the situations in which masks can be removed. We are shifting to infection control measures that are more balanced, with compliance with infection control measures in situations where the risk of infection is high, and a return to normal life in situations where the risk of infection is low.

- Communication for Resilience

In the future, many social risks such as disasters and health crises as well as infectious diseases will surely have a significant impact on the region and the tourism industry. Based on this experience, by establishing a foundation for risk communication in the region, no matter what events occur in the future, it will be possible to respond flexibly, protect the region, and quickly resume tourism. Use this guideline as a process to establish risk communication in a community.

- Thorough Response on Discrimination

Cluster infections are expected to continue to occur in the community and inbound tourists this winter, and in smaller areas, names and locations are more likely to be

naturally identified. As infection control measures are eased, we may have mixed feelings about people not wearing masks. However, please consider that everyone is living their life, that it is the virus, not the person, that has issues, and there is no other way but to live with the virus. We would like to state clearly that discrimination against people or those who have been in close contact with the virus is not acceptable under any circumstances.

2. Infection Control Measures

The following infection prevention measures have been set in reference to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and travel industry associations. However, it is possible to implement stronger infection control measures than those listed below based on the guidelines of each facility. We strongly recommend that foreigners visiting Japan purchase travel insurance that covers medical treatment in Japan. This is for the safety and security of our community and travelers, so we recommend that accommodation and transportation facilities also present the following five items when accepting reservations.

2.1 Wearing a mask

- Outdoors, you may remove your mask.
 - Indoors, you should wear a mask.

 - Wear a mask when talking within 2m
 - You may remove the mask if you are not speaking within 2m
- ※ Children under five years old are not required to wear masks.
- ※ Wear a mask on public transportation such as buses, airplanes, and trains.

2.2 Hand sanitization

- Regularly sanitize your hands with alcohol.
- Wash your hands regularly.

2.3 Social distance

- Maintain a certain distance where your shoulders don't touch with others.
 - No specific regulations regarding the number of people to be accommodated.
- ※ Installation of acrylic panels is not essential if social distance can be ensured

2.4 Temperature and health check

- Recommended measuring body temperature at the entrance of the facility and in hands-on projects.
 - Recommend that accommodation and hands-on projects check the health condition.
- ※ If tourists have a fever or symptoms, recommend a visit to an outpatient fever clinic (you can refuse service by law)
- ※ Staff also should monitor for fever and wellness before work

2.5 Ventilation

- In areas where people gather, ventilation is strongly recommended at least once every 30 minutes
 - Consider installing an air purifier if ventilation is difficult
- ※ Inadequate ventilation is a cause of increased infections during the winter.

3. Public Health Flow for Fever or Symptoms

- The following flow is for people at low risk of COVID-19 complications.
 - 1) Positive antigen test or PCR test results and home isolation.
- ※ New guidelines do not necessarily require visiting an outpatient fever clinic.
 - 2) Register as a positive case by yourself at the Hokkaido Health Positive Registration Center.
<https://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/hf/kst/124211.html>
- People at high risk of COVID-19 complications, the following flow.
 - Children (under elementary school age)
 - Pregnant woman
 - Those with underlying medical conditions
 - Elderly people are
 - 1) Visit an fever clinic or your family doctor as soon as possible.
 - 2) The medical institution must notify the public health center and follow the instructions of the public health center.
- The same flow is applied to foreign visitors to Japan as above, and the following is the window for correspondence.

Hokkaido Health Consultation Center for New Type Coronavirus Infections (for fever and symptomatic conditions)

0120-501-507 (toll free, 24 hours)

Hokkaido Health Support Center for Positive People (if your health condition worsens due to positivity)

0120-303-111 (24 hours)

4. Isolation (as of November 29, 2022)

- If asymptomatic, isolation will be lifted on the 8th day from the specimen collection date (defined as day 0)
 - If the antigen test is negative on the 5th day, it can be released on the 6th day.
- In symptomatic cases, isolation will be terminated when the following conditions are met
 - Day 8 from the day of onset (defined as day 0)
 - More than 24 hours after symptom improvement

From Kutchan Public Health Center (Japanese)

<https://www.shiribeshi.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/hk/hgc/covid19.html>

5. Frequently Asked Questions

- What should I do if a staff or a foreigner visiting Japan has a fever?

First, the person will be placed on standby at home or in a room to make arrangements for the testing (antigen or PCR). Children (before elementary school), pregnant women, people with underlying medical conditions, and the elderly (above 65 years old) should visit a local fever clinic as soon as possible. For other people, if the antigen test or PCR test is positive, you will be required to stay at home or in a hotel room for a specified period to be isolated. During the period, public transportation will not be available, so a tourist will need to reschedule their travel. Staff with fever and symptoms may return to work if tests are negative and the fever and symptoms have resolved.

- Do I need to wear a mask on the slopes?

In principle, you do not need to wear a mask outdoors, and even in the Condor you do not need to wear a mask if you are not conversing. When you talk with cableway staff, instructor, patrol, etc. within 2m, it is necessary to wear a mask, so please carry a mask.

- Are there any precautions to be taken when disinfecting rental equipment or facilities?

Disinfection against corona is now better with normal cleaning and disinfection. It is recommended to clean frequently contacted areas twice a day. However, when cleaning a room where a positive person has stayed, clean the room after ventilating it for a certain period of time and wearing a mask and gloves.

- What should foreign visitors to Japan be aware of?

Foreign visitors to Japan are also under the jurisdiction of the public health center, but since the response will be in Japanese, an interpreter will be required. Some medical institutions have difficulty providing services in English. Above all, in the case of positive cases or those who have had intense contact with the disease, travel by public transportation will be restricted, so it is important to coordinate the trip by securing a place to recuperate, rescheduling return trip, and in some countries, PCR may be needed when returning to home country. Again, we strongly recommend that the international tourist purchase travel insurance prior to travel that also covers treatment for new coronavirus infection.

6. Referenced guidelines

Guidelines for response to novel coronavirus infection in the travel industry (3rd ed.)
Japan Association of Travel Agents National Association of Travel Agents November 22, 2021

Guidelines for responding to novel coronavirus in chartered buses (3rd ed.)

Charter Bus Travel Liaison Meeting November 22, 2021

Guidelines for accepting and responding to foreign tourists
Japan Tourism Agency June 7, 2022

Guidelines for response to novel coronavirus in ski resorts
Japan Snow Sports & Resorts Council December 27, 2021

About new coronavirus infection
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare November 16, 2022

Task Force for the Prevention of a New Corona Influenza Pandemic
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare October 18, 2022

※ The year has been revised to the western calendar for the purpose of English.

Supervisor: Dr. Yuito Okada, University of Hawaii, Epidemiologist in US/JP
Advisor to the Kutchan Tourism Association