



The BMJ

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2020;370:m3240<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m3240>

Published: 14 August 2020

Sixty seconds on . . . quarantining

Abi Rimmer

Quarantini, the cocktail of the pandemic?

Sadly no, we're talking about new rules which mean that travellers returning from countries including France, Malta, and the Netherlands will be required to quarantine for 14 days from 15 August.¹

Zut alors!

Yes, quite. While this isn't so much of a problem for people working from home, it could prove expensive for those who have to go into a workplace, such as healthcare workers, who may lose two weeks' pay.²

Bonnes vacances . . . not

If you think this sounds unfair then you're not alone. The mayor of greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, with the mayor of the Liverpool city region, Steve Rotherham, and the Trades Union Congress, has launched a campaign calling for people to be able to claim for any lost wages while in quarantine.³

Does that add up?

The #TimeOutToHelpOut campaign says that, like jury service, quarantine is a civic duty and employers should continue to pay employees as normal and claim the salary back from the government.⁴

You can't object to that . . .

No, but while we're discussing the law it's also worth pointing out that in England it's an offence to refuse to quarantine without good reason, under the Health Protection Regulations 2020, which came into force on 8 June.⁵

From La Belle France to Belmarsh?

Not quite. You're unlikely to end up in jail but, in England, if you don't quarantine you can be fined £1000, and if you don't provide accurate contact information you can be fined up to £3200.⁶

That's more than the cost of the holiday

Quite—so it might just be worth fixing yourself a double quarantini and following the rules.

Correction: We amended this article on 18 August 2020 to reflect the World Health Organization's distinction between "quarantine" (separating people who are not ill but may have been exposed to covid-19) and "self-isolating" (separating ill or infected people from others to prevent spreading infection).

- 1 Department for Transport, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. France, the Netherlands, Monaco, Malta, Turks and Caicos Islands, and Aruba to be removed from travel corridors list. 13 August 2020. www.gov.uk/government/news/france-the-netherlands-monaco-malta-turks-and-caicos-islands-and-aruba-to-be-removed-from-travel-corridors-list.
- 2 NHS Employers. Revised quarantine guidance. July 2020. www.nhsemployers.org/-/media/Employers/Documents/COVID19/COVID19-and-quarantine-revised-July-2020.pdf.
- 3 Williams J. Live: Mayor Andy Burnham joins launch of campaign for self-isolating workers and says pub closures will be "difficult to resist" if they don't follow safety measures. Manchester Evening News. 10 August 2020. www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/live-mayor-andy-burnham-joins-18744805.
- 4 Time out to help out. www.timeouttohelpout.com
- 5 Crown Prosecution Service. Coronavirus: health protection (coronavirus, international travel, and public health information) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2020. 7 August 2020. www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/coronavirus-health-protection-coronavirus-international-travel-and-public-health.
- 6 Department of Health and Social Care. Why self-isolating is important. 31 July 2020. www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk#why-self-isolating-is-important.

This article is made freely available for use in accordance with BMJ's website terms and conditions for the duration of the covid-19 pandemic or until otherwise determined by BMJ. You may use, download and print the article for any lawful, non-commercial purpose (including text and data mining) provided that all copyright notices and trade marks are retained.