

Talking Points

- The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to partnering with national, regional, and global stakeholders to prevent, detect and respond to health emergencies globally while protecting Americans home and abroad.
 - Rwanda's Ministry of Health announced an outbreak of Marburg virus disease (MVD) on September 27. MVD is a rare, severe viral hemorrhagic fever similar to Ebola, which is spread by contact with blood or body fluids of a person infected with or who has died from MVD.
 - The Biden-Harris Administration is working closely with the Government of Rwanda to end the MVD outbreak as quickly as possible. There are currently no confirmed MVD cases outside of Rwanda.
 - In times of crisis, we must work together to quickly save lives. The Government of Rwanda has taken well-coordinated, rapid, and effective action to contain this outbreak and protect the health and wellbeing of the Rwandan people through rapid contact tracing, infection prevention and control practices, and exit screening implementation. The United States will continue supporting those efforts. CDC has been onsite in Rwanda since October 2, and they will continue to provide their support and expertise to the Government of Rwanda.
 - CDC assesses the risk to the United States is low. However, past experience during the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak has shown that even a single travel-related case can cause significant fear and disruption.
 - Therefore, out of an abundance of caution, we are implementing additional public health measures for the very small number of travelers who are arriving in the United States from Rwanda daily. This includes changes to the CDC and Department of State travel notices and advisories for Rwanda to raise awareness and will involve additional health screening, including temperature checks, for anyone with origin or travel to Rwanda within the past 21 days who are seeking to enter the United States.
 - On October 7, CDC issued a Level 3 Travel Health Notice for Rwanda, which includes recommendations for people traveling to Rwanda to reconsider nonessential travel. CDC will begin contacting all air travelers who arrive to the United States from Rwanda with information on MVD and guidance for follow-up as needed.
 - Also on October 7, the Department of State updated its Travel Advisory Health Notice for Rwanda to Level 3 - Reconsider Nonessential Travel.
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- Just as we have for other viral hemorrhagic fever outbreaks in the past, the United States is implementing additional precautions, including additional public health entry screenings; this will affect a limited number of travelers who arrive in the United States from Rwanda.
 - Passengers traveling to the United States by air who have departed from, or were present in, Rwanda within 21 days of the date of the person's entry or attempted entry into the United States will be required to enter the United States through one of three airports for public health entry screening: New York City (JFK), Washington-Dulles (IAD), or Chicago-O'Hare (ORD). These measures will be administered by the Department of Homeland Security in full coordination with CDC and the Department of Transportation.
 - U.S. officials are working with airlines to ensure carriers will rebook affected passengers who had planned to enter the United States through other airports. All affected travelers--including U.S. citizens--flying to the United States are required to participate in the screening.
 - This enhanced traveler health entry screening upon arrival in the United States aligns with the public health surveillance efforts of the Government of Rwanda, which has implemented comprehensive and impressive exit screening procedures at Kigali International Airport.
 - Again, these measures are best practices that will enhance awareness for travelers and airport personnel. These procedures provide additional safety measures on top of the already comprehensive U.S. screening measures aimed at limiting the spread of other infections through air travel.
 - The United States is not advocating for any border closures or travel bans in response to the MVD outbreak.
 - The United States has appreciated the full cooperation and robust response by the Government of Rwanda and is mindful of moving these travel entry screening measures back down as soon as is feasible.
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