

Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis



Crew Module

In order to promote safe and sustainable international air travel, a closely coordinated international approach to the treatment of air crews, consistent with recognized public health standards, will be essential to alleviate burdens on critical transportation workers. These currently include screening, quarantine requirements, and immigration restrictions that apply to other travelers. The attached crew module contains specific guidance addressing the contact of a crew member with a suspected or positive COVID-19 case, reporting for duty, dedicated end-to-end crew layover best practices, crew members experiencing COVID-19 symptoms during layover, and positioning of crew.

The elements of this module are:

- Crew-Module --- Crew Members
- Crew-Module --- Flight Crew
- Crew-Module --- Cabin Crew
- Crew-Module --- Layover

Crew Module - Crew Members

To provide harmonized health protection and sanitation considerations applicable to crew members that can be implemented globally.

Considerations

General (applicable to all crewmembers)

Facilitation

- Crew members, maintenance, cargo/load specialized personnel who are involved in flights with a stopover, should not need to be medically quarantined and/or observations while on layover or observed after returning, unless they were exposed to a known symptomatic passenger or crew member on board or during the stopover.
- States should consider implementing measures that facilitate the continued operation of aircraft, such that:
 - Quarantine measures will not be imposed on crew who require a layover, or rest, for the purposes of complying with Flight Time Limitation (FTL) rest requirements;
 - Crews should not be subject to screening or restrictions applicable to other travelers. Crew members should ensure that health screening methods are as non-invasive as possible.
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 - all crew members meet all relevant customs, immigration, and health requirements;
 - complete the appropriate forms on arrival and departure; and
 - use the correct customs and immigration channels at the airports.

Note: Crew members operating passenger aircraft with cargo only, for example, should ensure that the correct notification has been sent to all agencies, to ensure that there is no confusion, or that crew members carried on board such as loadmasters, engineers, and cabin crew are correctly recognized and designated on the crew manifest.

Health monitoring

- Crew members should monitor themselves for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19. A measured temperature of 38°C or higher is the WHO case definition.
- Crew members should take their temperature at least twice per day during duty periods and at any time they feel unwell;
- Crew members should stay at home or in their hotel room, notify their employers occupational health program, and not report for work if they develop a fever, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19, and should not return to work until cleared to do so by the employers occupational health program and public health officials.

Exposure concerns include the following:

- Are within a mandated period quarantine related to previous travel and/or duty;
- Positive test for Covid-19 regardless of symptoms evident;
- Know that they have been exposed to a person showing symptoms of Covid-19;
- Are experiencing any symptoms of Covid-19;
- Have recovered from Covid-19 symptoms but have not been assessed by the employer's Occupational health program and/or public health authority.

During Flight:

- If a crew member develops symptoms during flight, the crew member should stop working as soon as practical, put on a surgical mask, notify the pilot in charge, and maintain the recommended physical distance from others, when possible to do so. Upon landing, individuals should follow up with airline medical and public health officials.

Health protection

- To protect the health of crew and health of others, including co-workers, crew members should:
 - Maintain recommended physical distance from others where possible, when working on the aircraft e.g., while seated on the jump seat(s) during take-off or landing, during ground transportation and while in public places;
 - If hands are not visibly dirty, the preferred method is using an alcohol-based hand rub for 20–30 seconds using the appropriate technique. 22 When hands are visibly dirty, they should be washed with soap and water for 40–60 seconds using the appropriate technique;
 - Along with frequent hand washing/sanitization, crew members should be reminded of the need to avoid touching their face wherever possible, including while wearing gloves;
 - Wear a face covering while around other people, especially in situations where the recommended physical distance from others cannot be maintained. Note, a face covering should not replace the use of surgical masks or other PPE provided in the Universal Precaution Kit (UPK) when interacting with a sick traveler on board an aircraft;
 - Avoid contact with people with a cough, fever, or shortness of breath or otherwise suspected of having COVID-19;
 - Before each flight, inspect and verify contents of the UPKs. Follow existing air carrier policy and procedures regarding the use of PPE in the UPKs, if needed to provide care to a sick traveler on board;
 - Follow the guidance and precautions of the state and relevant health authorities related to COVID-19;

The contents of an aircraft Universal Precaution Kit would typically include: dry powder that can convert small liquid spill into a granulated gel, germicidal disinfectant for surface cleaning, skin wipes, face/eye mask (separate or combined), gloves (disposable), impermeable full length long sleeved gown that fastens at the back, large absorbent towel, pick-up scoop with scraper, bio-hazard disposal waste bag and instructions.

Additionally, airlines should:

- Provide sufficient quantities of cleaning and disinfectant products (e.g. disinfectant wipes) that are effective against COVID-19 for use during flight;
- Consider providing face covering to crew members for routine use when on duty, if these do not interfere with required PPE, job tasks and when it is difficult to maintain the recommended physical distance from co-workers or passengers at all times.

Use of lavatories

- Ideally, one or more lavatories should be reserved for crew use, in order to limit the potential for infection from passengers.

Crew rest compartments

- To minimize any possibility of cross infection, where pillows, cushions, sheets, blankets or duvets are provided, these should not be used by multiple persons unless coverings are laundered or changed.
- Some airlines issue each crew member with their own provisions and the cabin crew members are responsible for ensuring that they are removed and bagged after use.
- Other airlines provide bulk loading for crew rest area bedding items. Where this is the case crews should install their own bedding items before their rest period and remove them hygienically afterwards.

Training devices

- Increase the frequency of routine cleaning of flight simulators and training devices and other training aids, or equipment used during training. Cleaning products used should be compatible with COVID-19 disinfectants.

Means for uniform implementation

- Ensure that these considerations are fully supported by:
 - The applicable non-governmental agencies
 - Public health, Immigration and Customs agencies
 - Civil Aviation Authorities
- A high degree of collaboration between airport operators and their associated stakeholder community;
- Associated policy, procedures and training are developed to reinforce the importance of these considerations.
- Use the Crew COVID-19 Status Card (PHC Form 1) or a similar one when appropriate.

Crew Module - Flight Crew

To provide harmonized health protection and sanitation considerations applicable to Flight Crew which can be implemented globally.

Considerations

- Limit, to the greatest extent possible access to the flight deck;
- Flight crew members should only leave the flight deck for short physiological breaks;
- In the case of flight crew at controls displaying symptoms, the operator should consider whether removal from the flight deck is an appropriate mitigation within their risk assessment;
- Carriers should ensure that when face masks are worn by flight crew or other crew members etc., that oxygen masks can be still rapidly placed on the face, properly secured, sealed, supplying oxygen on demand and flight crew are provided with the correct guidance on how to do so;
- When leaving flight deck, make sure all items are stowed, personal items removed, and flight-deck is ready for cleaning and disinfection;
- Prior to each cockpit crew change, ensure that the flight-deck has been fully sanitized;
- Reduce in person interactions with the cabin crew to a minimum;
- If possible, designate one person only to be able to enter cockpit if necessary;
- Only one member of the flight crew or technical crew should be allowed to disembark the aircraft to complete the external inspection, refueling, etc., in such case direct contact with the ground crew should be avoided.

Means for uniform implementation

- Ensure that these considerations are fully supported by:
 - The applicable non-governmental agencies
 - Public health, Immigration and Customs agencies
 - Civil Aviation Authorities
- A high degree of collaboration between airport operators and their associated stakeholder community;
- Associated policy, procedures and training are developed to reinforce the importance of these considerations.
- Use the Crew COVID-19 Status Card (PHC Form 1) or a similar one when appropriate.

Crew Module - Cabin Crew

To provide harmonized health protection and sanitation considerations applicable to Cabin Crew which can be implemented globally.

Considerations (in addition to those of a crew member)

- Cabin crew who are in contact with a passenger suspected to be infected should not visit the flight deck unless operationally necessary;
- While limiting the number and frequency of physical flight crew checks, an alternative method of checking on flight crew welfare such as regular interphone calls should be implemented;
- The use of PPE should not impact the ability to carry out normal, abnormal and emergency safety procedures, such as the donning of oxygen masks, carrying out firefighting procedures etc.;
- Safety demonstration equipment should not be shared to the extent feasible to reduce the likelihood of virus transmission. If they must be shared, alternate means of demonstration without the equipment should be considered or the equipment should be thoroughly sanitized between uses.

Means for uniform implementation

- Ensure that these considerations are fully supported by:
- The applicable non-governmental agencies
- Public health, Immigration and Customs agencies
- Civil Aviation Authorities
- A high degree of collaboration between airport operators and their associated stakeholder community;
- Associated policy, procedures and training are developed to reinforce the importance of these considerations.
- Use the Crew COVID-19 Status Card (PHC Form 1) or a similar one when appropriate.

Crew Module - Layover

To ensure that all crew that are required to layover or transit at an outstation are aware of the measures necessary to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Refer to ICAO Electronic Bulletin EB 2020/30 or as amended for the most up to date guidance.

Considerations

Layover/ transits

If crew are required to layover or transit at an outstation, the air operator is to coordinate with the State public health authorities at airports and implement the following:

- Commute arrangements (between airport and hotel, if required):
The air operator should arrange for the commute between the aircraft and the crew's individual hotel rooms ensuring hygiene measures are applied and the recommended physical distancing, including within the vehicle, to the extent possible.
- At accommodation:
 - a) At all times, crew must comply with relevant public health regulations and policies
 - b) One crew member to one room, which is sanitized prior to occupancy;
 - c) Crew, taking account of the above, and insofar as is practicable, should:
 - i. Avoid contact with the public and fellow crew members, and remain in the hotel room except to seek medical attention, or for essential activities including exercise, while respecting physical distancing requirements.
 - ii. Not use the common facilities in the hotel;
 - iii. Dine in-room, get take-outs or dine seated alone in a restaurant within the hotel, only if room service is not available;
 - iv. Regularly monitor for symptoms including fever; and,
 - v. Observe good hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures when required to leave the hotel room only for the reasons specified in (i), (iii) or emergency situations.
- Crew members experiencing symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 during layover or transit should:
 - a) Report it to the aircraft operator and seek assistance from a medical doctor for assessment of possible COVID-19;
 - b) Cooperate with the assessment and possible further monitoring for COVID-19 in accordance with the evaluation procedure implemented by the State (e.g. assessment in the hotel room, or an isolation room within the hotel, or alternative location);
- If a crew member has been evaluated and COVID-19 is not suspected in accordance with the above procedures implemented by the State, the air operator may arrange for the crew member to repatriate to base; and

- If a crew member is suspected or confirmed as a COVID-19 case by the State and isolation is not required by the State, such crew member could be medically repatriated by appropriate modes; if there is agreement to repatriate the crew member to home base.

Means for uniform implementation

- Ensure that these considerations are fully supported by:
 - The applicable non-governmental agencies
 - Public health, Immigration and Customs agencies
 - Civil Aviation Safety Authority Suriname (CASAS)
- A high degree of collaboration between airport operators and their associated stakeholder community;
- Associated policy, procedures and training are developed to reinforce the importance of these considerations.
- Use the Crew COVID-19 Status Card (PHC Form 1) or a similar one when appropriate.