



Vaccination of Aviation Workers

Position Paper

Background

The impact of COVID-19 on the global air transport supply chain continues to be significant, with airlines struggling to cope with the unpredictable and ever-changing border restriction measures implemented by States.

In recognition of the critical role that air transport performs in the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and medicines around the world to help combat the pandemic and in anticipation of the vital role that aviation will play in shipping vaccine supplies around the globe, ICAO's Council Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) noted that aviation workers are categorized as "essential workers" and therefore recommended that they should not be subject to the same restrictions as those applied to the general traveling public.

Despite this guidance, airlines are struggling with an increasing trend whereby States are applying public health measures, such as testing and quarantine requirements, to crew in the same way that they are applied to the general traveling public. As set out in IATA's position paper on [Crew Testing](#) this constitutes a considerable operational and financial burden for airlines.

Prioritization of Aviation Workers for Access to Vaccination

Given the importance of air transport in distribution of vaccines, IATA calls on governments to prioritize aviation workers for access to vaccination once the elderly, vulnerable groups and health workers have been vaccinated.

IATA's call to government is aligned with the World Health Organization's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization proposed [Roadmap for Prioritizing Uses of COVID-19 Vaccines](#). This outlines priority populations for vaccination based on epidemiologic setting and vaccine supply scenarios. Within this framework, SAGE has included transportation workers alongside other groups of essential and front-line workers such as, for example, police.

Vaccination as a Voluntary Measure

Vaccination should not be a mandatory requirement for aviation workers, in the same way that it should not be a mandatory requirement for international travelers once vaccines become more widely available for the general public. Mandating vaccination would discriminate against those individuals who are not able to get vaccinated due to medical reasons or who are unwilling to do so due to ethical or other concerns. Moreover, a mandatory requirement would discriminate against aviation workers from countries where vaccines may still not have been approved or be available.

While vaccination should be voluntary rather than mandatory, any aviation worker who has been vaccinated should be exempt from other measures including, but not necessarily limited to, testing and quarantine.