



International
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Международная
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Subject: Adherence to relevant ICAO Annex 9 – *Facilitation* Standards; and Actions taken by Member States to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) by air transport and to protect the health of air travellers and the aviation personnel.

Action required: Member States are urged to: a) establish National Facilitation Committees in line with Annex 9 Standard 8.19; b) adhere to Annex 9 Standards 4.7 and 8.8 related to air cargo operations; c) take into account the guidance material in relation to screening measures; and d) provide ICAO with their actions taken to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) by air transport aiming at protecting the health of air travellers and aviation personnel, no later than 30 April 2020.

Sir/Madam,

On 6 March 2020, in a joint statement, ICAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) reminded all stakeholders of the importance of following existing regulations and guidance, particularly the relevant standards contained within the various Annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention) and the International Health Regulations (2005): <https://www.icao.int/Security/COVID-19/Pages/Statements.aspx>.

On 9 March 2020, the ICAO Council, at the Fourth Meeting of the 219th Session, adopted a Declaration on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), <https://www.icao.int/Security/COVID-19/Pages/Declaration.aspx>, in which, the Council “affirmed the urgent need to reduce the public health risk of the spread of COVID-19 by air transport and protect the health of air travellers and aviation personnel” and urged Member States and stakeholders to notably, “apply existing Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) contained in ICAO Annexes to the Chicago Convention, and the existing guidance provided by WHO when addressing outbreaks of communicable diseases that pose a public health emergency of international concern”.

On 11 March 2020, the Director-General of the WHO declared the outbreak of the COVID-19 a pandemic without recommending any travel or trade restrictions. All countries must strike a fine balance between protecting public health, respecting human rights and minimizing economic and social disruption.

In that regards, States are reminded of the related ICAO Annex 9 - *Facilitation* provisions to expediting the release and clearance of goods carried by air, with a focus on Standard 4.7, regarding use of modern screening or examination techniques for examination of goods, and Standard 8.8 for the facilitation of entry, departure and transit of aircraft engaged in relief flights and to implement all measures to facilitate the receipt of aid, including overflight and landing rights and necessary privileges and immunities for relief units, in an effort to avoid disruption.

I have been pleased to note that several States have implemented measures to prevent disruptions to such critical operations, by maintaining all cargo flights and excluding crew members of cargo flights from quarantine. There is an urgent need to ensure sustainability of the global air cargo supply chain and in maintaining the availability of medication, and equipment such as ventilators, masks and other health and hygiene-related goods, which are necessary to assist in reducing the public health risk of the spread of COVID-19.

Furthermore, some States have reported the implementation of entry screening for air travellers. Evidence, however, has shown that entry screening may miss infected cases and States are reminded not to rely on entry screening as a stand-alone measure. Screening measures should be part of a multilayer strategy.

In order to share with States aviation stakeholders and air travellers, the various measures taken by States to reduce the public health risk of the spread of COVID-19 by air transport and protect the health of air travellers and aviation personnel, ICAO has developed a COVID-19 homepage on its public website, <https://www.icao.int/Security/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>.

In light of the above, States' are strongly urged to:

- a) coordinate between aviation and health authorities and to establish National Facilitation Committees that comprise all relevant groups, in line with Annex 9 Standard 8.19, taking into account that cross-sector collaboration at the national level is essential;
- b) adhere to the relevant Annex 9 Standards intended to ensure sustainable air cargo operations and global air cargo supply chain;
- c) take into account the guidance material contained in Appendix 12, page 12-2 to Annex 9, notably the ones related to screening measures to be applied in a health emergency and the additional information found in Chapters 4 and 8 of ICAO Doc 9957, *The Facilitation Manual* and Doc 10042, *Model National Air Transport Facilitation Programme*; and
- d) provide ICAO with the actions taken to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 by air transport aiming at protecting the health of air travellers and the aviation personnel, no later than 30 April 2020. The requested information to be sent to ICAO by e-mail at, fal@icao.int will be shared on the ICAO public website COVID-19.

For additional information on Annex 9 – *Facilitation* Standards and Recommended Practices and assistance for its implementation, please contact Chief, Facilitation Section, Dr Narjess Abdennebi at fal@icao.int.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Fang Liu
Secretary General