

# Engagement/Collaboration mechanisms of Public Health and Aviation Authorities of Sri Lanka against COVID-19 Pandemic



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## Civil Aviation Authority and Public Health Authority of Sri Lanka

Public Health Specialists usually are without training or experience in aviation medicine or unaware of aviation rules and regulations. Almost invariably such a Public Health Specialists will concentrate more on public health measures than a balanced approach to the problem.

Same in Aviation field, Aeromedical Specialists are not trained on Public Health, they trained on Aviation medicine & do not have proper understanding on Public Health regulations.

### Sri Lanka

CAPSCA member since 2012

Identified the importance of collaboration of these two main stakeholders to fight against any kind of Public Health Emergency of International Concern as Air Transport is one of the main sources of spread of any kind of disease any where in the world.

We started to work together since 2012, our teams including Public Health Authority participated in CAPSCA meetings & training. We jointly did presentations on the improvements made at PoEs according to the ICAO CAPSCA & WHO IHR requirements.

We always believe ICAO CAPSCA project bridge the gap between Aviation & Health sectors.



## Public Health involvement in Aviation

In Sri Lanka National IHR co-focal points are:

1. Quarantine Unit of Ministry of Health
2. Epidemiology unit of Ministry of Health

All Airport & Port Public Health Offices of International PoEs in Sri Lanka are under Quarantine Unit of Ministry of Health.

BIA- The Designated Airport for PHEIC

## National Public Health Contingency Plan for Designated Airports in Sri Lanka

### National Public Health Contingency Plan for Designated Airports in Sri Lanka



- This was developed by Quarantine Unit of Ministry of Health in collaboration of CAASL



## Importance of all Stakeholder involvement

### **All specialties related to PoEs involved to initiate measures at an early stage of the pandemic of COVID-19.**

- Ministry of Health
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Airport and Aviation Services Limited
- Sri Lankan Airlines
- Department of Immigration & Emigration
- Sri Lanka Customs
- Sri Lanka Army/ Sri Lanka Air Force and Sri Lanka Police
- Airport Security, Ground Handlers etc....

The all efforts were made to have a well collaborated plan to prevent spread of COVID through PoEs.



## Importance of all Stakeholder involvement

- Staff had international exposure, training & experience of handling PHEIC through ICAO CAPSCA programme since 2012 & WHO IHR(2005).
- Since then CAASL & MoH worked together at PoEs in Sri Lanka and staff were prepared to face a PHEIC.
- Frequent meetings were conducted with all relevant stakeholders
- Conducted simulation exercises (table top exercises, drills at BIA) to combat PHEIC
- Conducted awareness programs to all stakeholders at PoEs on COVID-19.

## Preventive measures taken at Airports

### Implemented Thermal scanners at BIA



### Conducted awareness programmes



## Preventive measures taken at Airports.....

- Staff trained on wearing PPE



- Additional staff was allocated by MoH to Airport Health Office/BIA
- Supplies given (masks, gloves, coveralls, goggles, face shields, Sanitizers)
- Awareness to the public made through videos, posters etc....

## Preventive measures taken at Airports.....

### **Health Declaration Form**

- All arriving pax must complete
- Includes Passenger details, symptoms and signs,
- Data entered and send to Epidemiology unit
- Currently all passengers are sent for centre based quarantine for 14 days followed by 14 days of home quarantine
- The surveillance of passengers in the community are done by the area MOH and PHIs

### **Day 1 PCR testing for arriving passengers at airport**



## Aviation Industry Take off procedures

**Sri Lanka is preparing to face the reality, Aviation industry need to rise again on to its heights with proper public health measures in place to fight against COVID.**

- A special task force appointed by DGHS including Civil Aviation Authority to develop a take off document.
- A guideline was prepared by Ministry of Health with other stakeholders including CAASL on Public Health Measures to be adopted by travellers during the Covid-19 outbreak in Sri Lanka
- This committee considers **ICAO CART document as the main guidance**, CAPSCA documents, WHO related documents, other related international documents and our own public health & aviation documents.
- Final take off will be taken place through Air Transport Facilitation Committee(FAL) which involves all stakeholders related to Aviation with the concurrence of all stakeholders



## CAASL & MoH Collaboration

**What we have achieved due to the collaboration during this COVID period:**

**1. Public Health measures were taken without causing inconveniences to crew members**

- a) Crew members are allowed to home quarantine, not in quarantine Centres
- b) Home quarantine period was imposed only for 7 days
- c) PCR checks are done according to the risk assessment
- d) Crew are allowed to have a separate entry/exit path at airports

**2. Rationalized wearing of PPEs according to the staff work place & risk**

**3. Public health measures to the aviation staff at Airports.**

- a) Home quarantining is allowed for the staff
- b) PCR checks are done according to the risk assessment

## Aviation Industry Take off procedures

**Finally the main message from Sri Lanka**

**Collaboration is very important between Civil Aviation Authorities and Public Health Authorities to overcome this situation.**

**Sri Lanka will continue to have these collaborative efforts between Civil Aviation & Public Health sector to prevent spread of diseases like COVID-19 through air travel.**

**Together we can make a difference and accomplish a lot.**



**THANK YOU!**